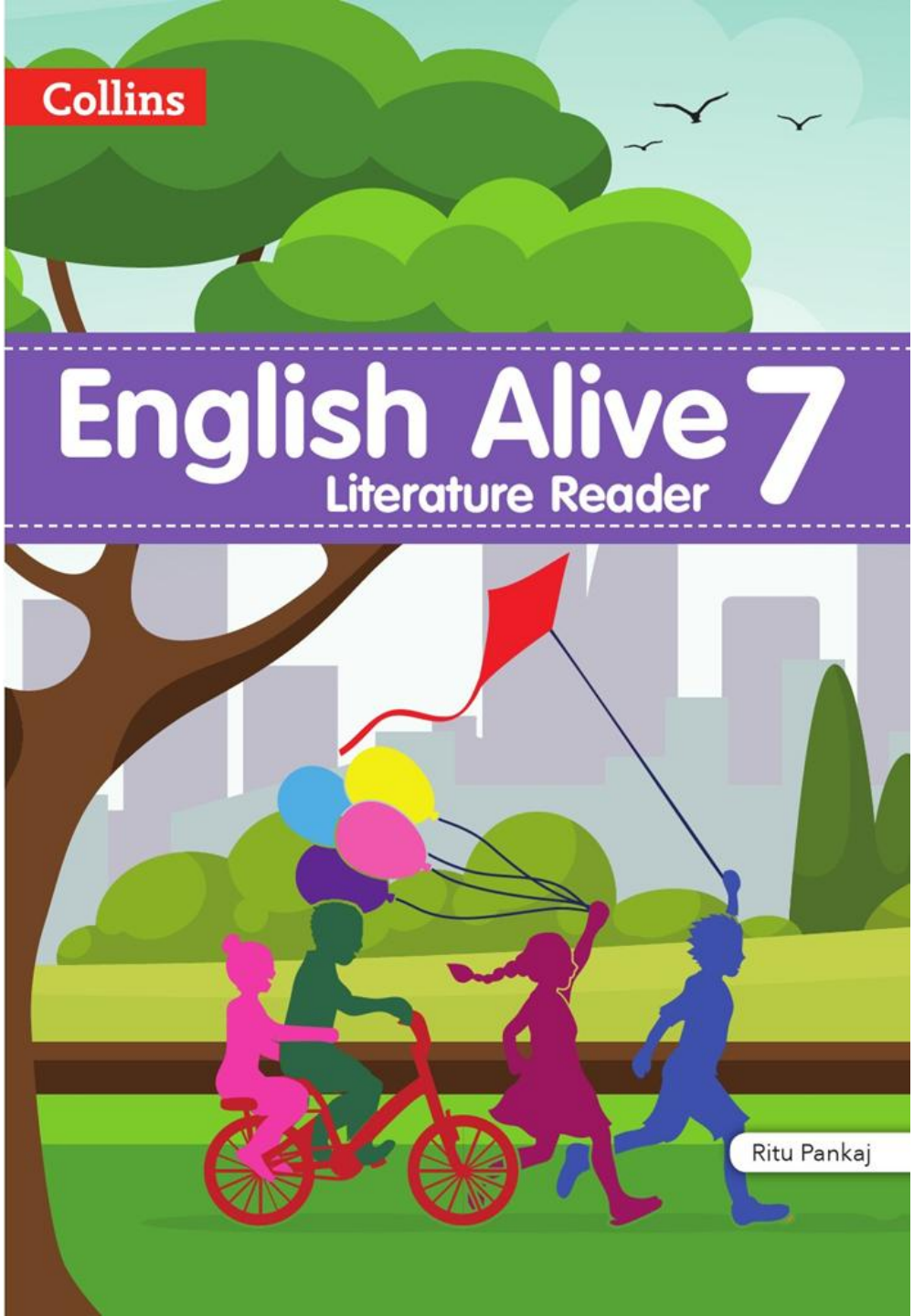
English Alive 7

Literature Reader


Collins
English Alive 7
Literature Reader
Ritu Pankaj

Published by Collins Learning
A division of HarperCollins*Publishers* India Private Limited

HarperCollins *Publishers*
A-75, Sector 57, Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201301, India
1 London Bridge Street, London, SE1 9GF, United Kingdom
2 Bloor Street East, Toronto, Ontario M4W 1A8, Canada
Lvl 13, 201 Elizabeth Street (PO Box A565, NSW, 1235), Sydney NSW 2000, Australia
195 Broadway, New York, NY 10007, USA

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SCHOOLSUPPORT@harpercollins.co.in or call us on **0120-4044800.**

First published in 2019
Latest reprint edition 2020
© HarperCollins*Publishers* India Private Limited 2019
Reprint: 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN: 978-93-5277-870-6

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Inside: Page **22**: Anastasiia_New; 34: DNY59; 73: Kathykonkle.

Preface

English Alive is a multi-skill course in English that uses innovative teaching and learning methods. The series teaches communicative English through interactive, cross-curricular activities. It strictly adheres to the guidelines laid down by the latest National Curriculum Framework.

The series comprises Coursebooks and Workbooks for grades 1 to 8, and Literature Readers for grades 3 to 8. Each grade package also includes a Teacher's Resource Book and a Collins DigiSuite DVD.

Key features

Coursebooks

Each Coursebook has a wide variety of texts and genres carefully selected from the literature of different ages and countries. The books aim at cross-curricular teaching and in addition to language skills, they also teach topics included in the syllabus of other subjects taught in the grades. A lot of interesting and engaging activities are used as tools to teach language skills.

Workbooks

Carefully mapped to the Coursebooks, the Workbooks aid independent learning. Each Workbook has 8 to 11 comprehension passages, including poems. The vocabulary and grammar sections include a recap of the concepts covered in the Coursebooks along with varied exercises. The listening, speaking and writing sections allow learners extra practice.

Literature Readers

The Literature Readers aim at inculcating in young learners the habit of reading for pleasure, and teach critical appreciation of literature through short stories, folk tales, fairytales, plays, poems, and extracts from classics and contemporary literature. Literary devices are taught contextually, with examples from the texts. Comprehension exercises, including inferential, extrapolative and value-based questions, and exercises for reinforcing vocabulary follow reading.

Teacher's Resource Books

The Teacher's Resource Books contain model lesson plans covering all the pedagogical aspects included in the Coursebooks, links to the Workbooks, and answer keys to all exercises.

Digital Resources

The Collins DigiSuite DVD comprises the Coursebook as an interactive e-book with animated poems and audio for pronunciation help, a Test generator and Teacher resources including lesson plans, answer keys, additional worksheets, and project ideas.

We hope with such unique features, the series will make language teaching and learning a memorable experience for both the teacher and the learner.

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1 The New Teacher

–Arthur Cavanaugh

READING

Teaching is not just a work of art, but a work of heart. You must have been taught by teachers who have inspired you! This story introduces us to a teacher who gives the impression of being a hard taskmaster and a disciplinarian, but actually loves teaching and believes in nurturing children with love. Read on to find out if she is rewarded or criticised.

It all began one Sunday afternoon. Young Roger Clark was explaining why he could go to Central Park with his father instead of finishing his spelling homework—Miss Wilson, his teacher, wouldn't be at school tomorrow. 'She has to take care of a crisis.'

'Till Miss Wilson gets back we will have another teacher. Miss Wilson flew to Omaha yesterday. I hope her plane doesn't crash,' he said worriedly. As noisy and exuberant as any eight-year-old, Roger had another side, tender and soft.

Virginia Clark assured her son, 'You'll have Miss Wilson safely back before you know it.'

Roger beamed with relief. 'Well, I like Miss Wilson. Last week, when Tommy Miller got tired of staying in his seat and lay down on the floor, Miss Wilson didn't mind. Pretty soon the whole class was lying down, including Miss Wilson. St Geoff's is fun!'

crisis: emergency
exuberant: energetic
tender: (here) kind

Literary Device

- *as loud and menacing as thunder* The **simile** establishes the loud clap of the strict teacher to be as frightening as thunder would be for a child.
- *You are not cattle milling in a pen.* The **metaphor** creates a comical image of the children behaving like undisciplined animals.

frolicsome: playful
countered: argued
permissive: easy going, lenient
homey: American for *homely*
scholastic: relating to school and education
atrocious: terrible
trading: (here) exchanging
spool: a round object onto which thread is wound
swarmed: crowded
rollicking: happy yet noisy
ranks: (here) group of children
stiff: (here) straight
menacing: something likely to cause harm
milling: moving around in a large group, with no purpose

'School isn't supposed to be a fun fest,' snorted his sister.

'Miss Wilson got down on the floor?' Mr Clark repeated.

'I'm sure not every day is as frolicsome,' Mrs Clark countered anxiously.

The school was permissive yet quite homey. However, Roger's scholastic progress wasn't notable—his spelling, for example, remained atrocious. Friendly as St Geoffrey's was, Mrs Clark sometimes did wish...

'So can I go to the park with you, Dad?' Roger asked.

'All right, but the minute we return, it's to your room to finish your spelling,' Mr Clark insisted.

Monday morning, school started off normally. Entering school, Roger skipped away eagerly to play before the 8:45 school bell. As usual, he had packed a supply of baseball cards for trading opportunities; a spool of string, in case anybody brought a kite; a water pistol for possible use in the lavatory; and a police whistle for sheer noise value. As the bell rang, Roger's class swarmed up the stairs in rollicking spirits.

'Hey, what's going on?' Jimmy Moore demanded as the front ranks reached the classroom. Instead of a cosy semicircle as usual, the desks and chairs had been rearranged in stiff, rigid rows. As if in answer to his question, he heard two hands clap behind him, as loud and menacing as thunder. 'You are not cattle milling in a pen. Come, come, form into lines.'

Heads turned in unison, mouths fell agape as each child stared at the lady with rimless spectacles. Tall and straight as a ruler, clothed in an ancient tweed suit, she bore a potted plant in one arm and Miss Wilson's roll book in the other. Her hair was gray, like a witch's, as were her eyes.

'Form lines.' Patrolling back and forth, the new teacher kneaded the grade into position.

'Sloppiest I've ever seen. *March*!'

She clapped time with her hands and the stunned ranks trooped into the classroom.

'Class, be seated, hands folded on desks,' the new teacher barked, and the class obeyed. She carefully installed the potted plant on the sill. 'Plants and children belong in classrooms. Both grow with proper care. Not by giving in to whims!'

She strode to the front of the room 'I am Miss Orville. *0-r-v-i-l-l-e*,' she spelled. Before my retirement, I taught boys and girls for forty-six years. I am beyond trickery, so I advise you to try none. Since I have no knowledge of your individual abilities, perhaps a look at the weekend homework will shed some light. Take out your notebooks, at once.'

Roger's head spun dizzily. He had returned to his room yesterday, but, alas, not to complete his assignment. He watched, horrified, as the tweed figure approached.

'You call this chicken scrawl penmanship?' R-r-rip! A page was torn out and thrust at its owner. 'Redo it at once, it assaults one's intelligence.' Then, moving on, 'What is this maze of ill-spelled words? Not a composition, I trust.'

Literary Device

- *You call this chicken scrawl penmanship.* The **metaphor** creates a vivid yet funny image of a student's atrocious handwriting.
- *What is this maze of ill-spelled words?* The imagery of the maze **metaphor** reveals the confusion the teacher faces while trying to figure out poorly spelled words.

in unison: at the same time; in harmony
rimless: without a frame
tweed: old fashioned rough, woollen cloth
patrolling: (here) keeping a watch
kneaded: (here) formed
sloppiest: most disorganised
trooped: walked in together
whims: one's wish
strode: walked taking long steps
assaults: (here) shames

Miss Orville was three desks away. Roger opened his book bag. It slid from his grasp and crashed to the floor. Books, pencil case, cards, strings spilled out.

'Ah,' crowed Miss Awful as she promptly seized the toys, 'We have come to play, have we?'

Long before the week's end, Roger, the happy-go-lucky youngster was replaced by a nervous child, continuously glancing over his shoulder. Mrs Clark got the first inkling when she went to pick up her offspring.

The third grade made a subdued and dazed exit from the building. Among them was Roger, who quickly led his mother down the block. Words erupted from him.

'We got a witch for a substitute teacher. She is from *Hansel and Gretel.* Miss Awful is her name! She *steals* our toys. Children are plants to her!'

His mother offered to treat him to a soda. 'Who's got time for sodas?' he moaned. 'I have punishment homework to do. Ten words, ten times each. I got every word wrong in today's spelling test!'

On Tuesday, the third grade marched down the school steps in military precision. '*One*, two, three, *one*, two, three,' the stiff-backed teacher counted, before dismissing them. Turning, she surveyed the wide-eyed mothers and walked up to Mrs Lambert.

'Mrs Lambert, your son threatens to grow into a useless member of society. He watches television for three hours every evening. He idles through his homework, scattering mistakes everywhere. I suggest you supervise him more closely.'

With a brief nod, Miss Orville left. It was a full minute before the mothers recovered enough to speak. On Thursday, Nancy Reeves, Bruce's mother remembered where she had seen Miss Orville after she had received a compliment from her.

Literary Device

She is from Hansel and Gretel. **Allusion** is an indirect reference to a person, event, or thing in history or literature. The **allusion** to the famous tale with the horrid witch is used by Roger to refer to his new teacher.

inkling: hint, clue
offspring: child
subdued: (here) quiet
precision: correctness
surveyed: looked over

'Mrs Reeves, there has been progress,' Miss Orville had said. 'On Monday, young Bruce's penmanship was comparable to a chicken's—if a chicken could write. Today, I was pleased to award him an A.'

'I know who she is,' Mrs Reeves remarked later, 'Remember when those old ramshackle buildings were torn down last year? Miss Orville was one of the tenants. She'd lived there for ages, and refused to budge, sitting in a rocker on the sidewalk, surrounded by furniture and plants. Her picture was in the papers. *Elderly retired schoolteacher...* They found a furnished room for her. Poor thing, evicted like that. I remember she couldn't keep any of the plants.'

On the way home that day, Roger asked his mother, 'What does *eviction* mean?'

'It's when somebody is forced by law to vacate an apartment.'

At the door to their apartment building, Roger pointed at a corner of the entryway. 'That's where the cat used to sleep, remember? I wonder if it was evicted too.'

Soon, it was Friday. Miss Orville told the class, 'I am happy to inform you that Miss Wilson will be back on Monday. This afternoon will be my final session with you. Not that discipline will relax, but I might read you a story.'

Only a few hours of the terrible reign of Miss Orville were left to endure. A certain spirit of defiance crept into the room. At lunch, the third grade talked of nothing except how to get even with Miss Orville.

'We could rip off all the dopey leaves from her old plant,' a girl suggested.

'We don't want to do that,' Roger said, 'let's call it quits,' not understanding why he objected. But no one listened to him.

After lunch Miss Orville opened the frayed volume of *Treasure Island*. 'You must know the tale of young Jim Hawkins and Long John Silver.'

'No, I don't,' said Tommy Miller.

'We don't, we don't,' some voices jeered.

ramshackle: in bad condition, likely to fall down
vacate: leave; give up
reign: rule
endure: tolerate
defiance: (here) disobedience
dopey: silly
call it quits: agree to end a dispute
frayed: worn or torn at the edges
jeered: made fun of

Miss Orville lowered the book. 'No, children, you mustn't do this. To attend school is a privilege you must not mock. Thousands of children in the world are denied the gift of schooling. It isn't enough any longer to accept a gift and make no return for it, not with the world in the shape it's in. If I have been severe with you this past week, it was for your benefit. The world needs good citizens. If I have helped one of you to grow a fraction of an inch, if just *one* of you—'

Her voice faltered. She had just noticed the torn and bare stems of her plant. Miss Orville said after a moment.

'To be truly educated is to be civilised. Here you see the opposite: violence and destruction.' She turned and faced the class. 'Whoever is responsible, I ask you only to be sorry,' she said, and returned to her desk.

At the close of class that afternoon, there was no forming of lines as all the children ran out. Only Roger Clark stayed behind.

Miss Orville was emptying the desk of her possessions. 'These are yours, I believe,' she said to Roger. In her hands were the water pistol, the baseball cards, and the spool of string.

Roger stuffed them in his coat pocket, yet stood at her desk.

'Yes?' Miss Orville asked.

Roger stood back, lifted his head and spelled, 'Flower—*F- l-o-w-e-r*.' He looked at Miss Orville's brimming eyes. 'Castle—*C-a-s-t-l-e*.'

Then he walked from the room.

Literary Device

Thousands of children in the world are denied the gift of schooling.
Education has been called a gift. The familiar **imagery** reminds the children about the importance of schooling and learning.

privilege: advantage
faltered: hesitated

About the Author

Arthur Cavanaugh (1924–2009) was an American novelist and playwright best known for writing television drama throughout the 1950s. His literary career spanned the publishing of four novels, two memoirs and over 50 short stories. Some of his better known pieces include *Leaving Home, Missed Trains, My Own Back Yard, The Children Are Gone* and *The Faithful.*

COMPREHENSION

A. Identify the speaker, guess the tone (the quality of the voice that expresses the speaker's feeling or mood) and reveal the character trait that is exhibited. A few have been done for you.

Tone	Character Trait
all-knowing *authoritative* *complaining* *emotional* *happy* *matter-of-fact* *open* *sarcastic* *warning* *worried*	*bossy* *caring* *devoted* *disciplinarian* *fun-loving* *grumpy* *honest and fair* *informed* *no-nonsense attitude* *strict*

Dialogue	Speaker	Tone	Character trait
1. *I hope her plane doesn't crash.*		worried	
2. *St Geoff's is fun.*			
3. *School isn't supposed to be a fun fest.*	Roger's sister		
4. *You are not cattle milling in a pen. Come, come, form into lines.*			disciplinarian
5. *Plants and children belong in classrooms. Both grow with proper care. Not by giving in to whims!*			

6. *Before my retirement, I taught boys and girls for forty-six years. I am beyond trickery, so I advise you to try none.*			
7. *I have no knowledge of your individual abilities, perhaps a look at the weekend homework will shed some light.*			
8. *We have come to play, have we?*		sarcastic	
9. *Miss Awful is her name! She steals our toys. Children are plants to her!*			
10. *If I have helped one of you to grow a fraction of an inch, if just one of you…*			

B. Answer the questions briefly.

1. What does the odd assortment of toys that Roger smuggled to school tell us about him? How does his attitude to the toys change by the end of the final class?
2. Which three interesting similes have been used in the story to describe the new teacher when the class meets her for the first time?
3. The new teacher *kneaded* the grade into position. What does the word mean in this context? Why did the new teacher need to do it?
4. Mention some of the drastic changes that the new teacher made right from day one. Why does she treat children like plants?

C. Think and answer the questions.

1. *Friendly as St Geoffrey's was, Mrs Clark sometimes did wish...* What do you think Mrs Clark wished for?

2. 'School isn't supposed to be a fun fest.' 'Miss Wilson got down on the floor?' 'I'm sure not every day is as frolicsome.' Why did Roger's family react to his disclosure? What does it tell us about each speaker? Who do you think tends to react most normally according to little Roger?
3. Initially Miss Orville openly criticises Mrs Lambert's son and later announces how she awarded Bruce's work with an A. Do you agree with the teacher's system of reward and punishment? Why/Why not?
4. Why does Mrs Reeves refer to Miss Orville as a *poor thing*? From a poor thing does she evolve into a kind of hero? Give reasons for your answer.
5. *To be truly educated is to be civilised.* Explain the importance of Miss Orville's last lesson in your own words.
6. The exposition or background of the story prepares us for the absence of Miss Wilson in Roger's school. The action gets exciting as a new teacher arrives and regiments the students. The climax brings the knowledge of the eviction, but despite the falling action in the ripping of the leaves, the resolution or the end of the story takes us by surprise. Why?

VOCABULARY

A. Every sentence uses a group word in the verb form. Identify the group word and make a sentence using it. One has been done for you.

1. Roger's class **swarmed** up the stairs cheerfully.
   A swarm of flies hovered over the garbage can.
2. The street was littered with plastic bags.
   .....
3. She teamed her blue jeans with a bright blue jersey.
   .....
4. The prisoners were herded into the small prison cell.
   .....

5. The bank robbery was orchestrated by a criminal mastermind.

.....

6. The thieves ganged up on the unsuspecting passer-by.

.....

7. Christmas buyers flocked to the shops to avail the discounts.

.....

8. An all-women's team crewed the aircraft.

.....

9. The children squabbled over the ball.

.....

10. Austria hosted the 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games.

.....

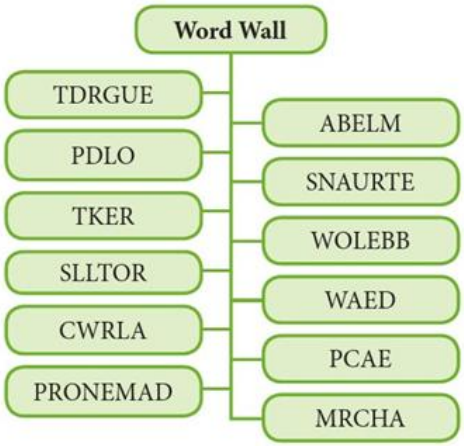
11. Security Forces patrolled along the borders day and night.

.....

12. The detective examined the fingernails of the victim, who was murdered last night.

.....

B. Unscramble the Walk words on the Word Wall. Then match each of them to its meaning and picture. One has been done for you.



Walk word	Meaning	Picture
1. *Trudge*	Walk slowly and with heavy steps mostly due to tough conditions	
2. A	Walk or move at a slow, relaxed pace, with no specific purpose	
3. P	A leisurely walk or ride especially in a public place for pleasure or display	
4. S	A carefree walk generally with a dog or in a park	
5. T	Going on a long journey mostly on foot, usually over hills or mountains	
6. P	Walk at a steady speed, especially without a particular destination and as an expression of anxiety or annoyance	
7. S	A slow but arrogant walk with feet dragging	
8. W	Walk with effort through water	

9. P	Walk laboriously through mud or snow	
10. W	Move or walk unsteadily	
11. C	Move forward on the hands and knees or by dragging the body close to the ground	
12. M	Walk in a military manner with regular measured steps	

WRITING

You are Miss Orville, the retired teacher who recently joined a school as a substitute teacher. Write a letter to your colleague in another city recounting some of the important incidents of the days at school, the indiscipline of the children, and the learning you wished to convey.

End the letter by describing what you learnt from the children and the experience because you know that to teach is to learn twice over.

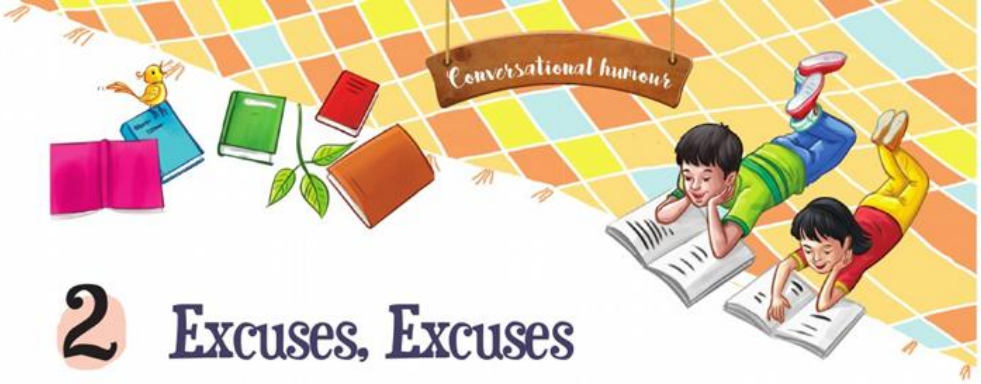
Read at leisure...

📖 *The Last Lesson* by Alphonse Daudet

This short story is an inspiring salute to both the teacher and the class he taught. The teacher, M. Hamel, delivers his last French lesson to the class, encouraging everyone to take their learning opportunities seriously. Through his teachings and actions, Hamel warns of negligence of duty by other teachers, pupils, and parents.

📖 *Seventh Grade* by Gary Soto

This short story is about a French class, where Victor pretends to know French, because he wants to impress Teresa. Mr Bueller, the French teacher, knows that Victor does not speak French. However, he must decide whether or not to tell Teresa that Victor cannot speak French.



2 Excuses, Excuses

–Gareth Owen

READING

Most of us have used excuses to escape a tricky situation at school or at work. Some excuses are justified, like submitting late work or reaching late due to traffic jams, bad weather, rain, or even illness. Read the poem where Blenkinsop seems very natural, even spontaneous, as the conversation between the teacher and him takes us through the drama of school excuses.

Late again Blenkinsop?
What's the excuse this time?
Not my fault, sir.
Whose fault is it then?
Grandma's, sir.
Grandma's. What did she do?
She died, sir.
Died?
She's seriously dead all right, sir.
That makes four grandmothers this term
And all on PE days Blenkinsop.
I know. It's very upsetting, sir.
How many grandmothers have you got Blenkinsop?
Grandmothers sir? None, sir.
None?
All dead, sir.
And what about yesterday Blenkinsop?
What about yesterday, sir?

Literary Device

seriously dead
The **idiomatic** expression *dead serious* sees a humorous reversal.

seriously: (here) really
PE: Physical Education

You missed maths.
That was the dentist, sir.
The dentist died?
No sir. My teeth, sir.
You missed the test Blenkinsop.
I'd been looking forward to it too, sir.
Right, line up for PE.
Can't, sir.
No such word as can't. Why can't you?
No kit, sir.
Where is it?
Home, sir.
What's it doing at home?
Not ironed, sir.
Couldn't you iron it?
Can't do it, sir.
Why not?
My hand, sir.
Who usually does it?
Grandma, sir.
Why couldn't she do it?
Dead, sir.

Literary Device

missed maths/ dentist died
These are good examples of **alliteration**.

kit: clothes and equipment for a specific purpose

About the Poet

Gareth Owen (1936–2002), born in England, left school at sixteen and went to sea but eventually ended up teaching. The English novelist and dramatist was the founder of a theatre company. He ran poetry workshops in schools and colleges, and gave readings at festivals and colleges, and on BBC Radio. At his first school he couldn't find any published poems that were about the ordinary life he had led, so he started writing his own. Inspired by his own Lancashire schoolboy life, he penned down his boyhood memories. He believed that 'writing has much more to do with memory and recognition than with mere invention'. Some of his most popular works are *Salford Road, My Granny Is a Sumo Wrestler, Omelette: A Chicken in Peril* and *Say Cheese!*

COMPREHENSION

A. How did the clever Blenkinsop outwit his teacher by weaving a web of excuses to avoid his PE class? Complete the table based on the conversation between the teacher and Blenkinsop.

Teacher's query	Blenkinsop's reply
The teacher demanded to know	Blenkinsop innocently replied ....
The teacher insisted on knowing whose fault it was.	Blenkinsop blamed ..... because she ..... .
The teacher cleverly pointed out that .... and	Blenkinsop obediently agreed that ..... .
He further clarified	To this the boy respectfully replied that he had none since ..... .
The boy's teacher further enquired about his absence the previous day when	The boy explained .... though he regretted missing it.
The class was ordered to	Blenkinsop refused to since ....
The irritated teacher wanted to know	The patient and clever Blenkinsop promptly answered that .... He went on to explain that it was not ironed since ..... .

B. Answer the questions briefly.

1. Why was Blenkinsop's teacher tired of him?
2. Whom did the boy blame for his late arrival?
3. What seemed ridiculous about Blenkinsop's grandmother's death?
4. Why had the errant child missed the math test even though he was looking forward to it?
5. What was his excuse for missing his PE class?
6. What does the poem reveal about Blenkinsop's character? Tick the character traits you agree with, and give reasons for your choice.

sense of humour *disciplined* *focused*
participates in sports and activities *curious* *irresponsible*
studious *imaginative* *lethargic* *confident* *observant*
witty *offensive* *ridiculous* *respectful* *honest*
friendly *patient* *clever*

VOCABULARY

Similes like *as dead as a doornail* and *as dead as a dodo* literally mean *quite dead*. Here are some idioms and phrases using *dead* but have little to do with death. Rewrite the sentences replacing the underlined words with their meanings from the box.

absolutely sure *stopped working* *embarrassed*
a place that leads nowhere *right in front* *outside the area of play*
middle of *quiet* *dull and tasteless* *exhausted*

1. The market square is <u>totally dead</u> at night.

.....

2. By the time I reached home, I was <u>dead as usual</u>.

.....

3. My phone has suddenly gone dead.

.....

4. This soda tastes quite dead.

.....

5. While walking down, we suddenly came to a dead end.

.....

6. The passerby directed us to the building which was dead ahead.

.....

7. I am dead certain that I shall get the role in the play.

.....

8. The empire declared that it was a dead ball.

.....

9. I hope I wouldn't be seen dead in this bright green dress.

.....

10. Survival is tough in the dead of winter especially when it snows heavily.

.....

WRITING

Write a creative poem on excuses that children make for not doing their homework.

Read at leisure...

📖 *All My Great Excuses* by Kenn Nesbitt

This is a humorous poem where a child narrates ridiculously funny excuses to his teacher for not doing his homework.

📖 *Sick* by Shel Silverstein

In this poem, the child refuses to go to school as her whole body is in a terrible pain. She keeps listing out excuses until she realises it's a holiday, and runs out to play.

3 A Mad Tea Party

–Lewis Carroll

READING

Has curiosity ever got the better of you and landed you in an unpleasant situation? This is exactly what happened to Alice, a young girl, who followed a white rabbit only to fall down a rabbit hole and enter a magical kingdom ruled by a cruel queen. This extract from Alice's Adventures in Wonderland describes Alice's encounter with a hat maker and his companions, with whom she sits down to a rather unusual tea party.

There was a table set out under a tree in front of the house, and the March Hare and the Hatter were having tea at it. A dormouse was sitting between them, fast asleep, and the other two were using it as a cushion, resting their elbows on it, and talking over its head. 'Very uncomfortable for the Dormouse,' thought Alice; 'only, as it's asleep, I suppose it doesn't mind.'

The table was a large one, but the three were all crowded together at one corner: 'No room! No room!' they cried out when they saw Alice coming. 'There's *plenty* of room!' said Alice angrily, and she sat down in a large armchair at one end of the table.

set out: laid out for meals with cutlery and crockery
Hatter: (here) hat maker, often referred as *Mad Hatter;* in the nineteenth century hat makers used mercury in the making of hats which caused mercury poisoning, leading to tremors or mood swings, making them appear *mad* to others
dormouse: a mouse-like rodent with a bushy tail

'It wasn't very polite of you to sit down without being invited,' said the March Hare.

'I didn't know it was *your* table,' said Alice. 'It's laid for a great many—more than three.'

'Your hair wants cutting,' said the Hatter. He had been looking at Alice for some time with great curiosity, and this was his first speech.

'You should learn not to make personal remarks,' Alice said with some severity. 'It's very rude.'

The Hatter opened his eyes very wide on hearing this; but all he said was, 'Why is a raven like a writing-desk?'

'Come, we shall have some fun now! I'm glad they've begun asking riddles.' thought Alice. 'I believe I can guess that,' she added aloud.

'Do you mean that you think you can find out the answer to it?' said the March Hare.

'Exactly so,' said Alice.

'Then you should say what you mean,' the March Hare went on.

'I do,' Alice hastily replied. 'At least—at least I mean what I say—that's the same, you know.'
'Not the same thing a bit!' said the Hatter. 'You might just as well say that "I see what I eat" is the same thing as "I eat what I see"!'

make personal remarks: comment on someone's appearance or behaviour
severity: strictness
raven: a large crow with coal-black feathers

'You might just as well say,' added the March Hare, 'that "I like what I get" is the same thing as "I get what I like"!'

'You might just as well say,' added the Dormouse, who seemed to be talking in his sleep, 'that "I breathe when I sleep" is the same thing as "I sleep when I breathe"!'

The party sat silent, while Alice thought about ravens and writing-desks, which wasn't much.

The Hatter was the first to break the silence. 'What day of the month is it?' he said, turning to Alice; he had taken his watch out of his pocket and was looking at it uneasily.

Alice thought a little and then said, 'The fourth.'

'Two days wrong!' sighed the Hatter. 'I told you butter wouldn't suit the works!' he added looking angrily at the March Hare.

'It was the *best* butter,' the March Hare meekly replied.

'Yes, but some crumbs must have got in as well,' the Hatter grumbled: 'you shouldn't have put it in with the bread-knife.'

The March Hare took the watch: then dipped it into his cup of tea, but he could think of nothing better to say than, 'It was the *best* butter, you know.'

'What a funny watch!' Alice remarked. 'It tells the day of the month, and doesn't tell what o'clock it is!'

'Why should it?' muttered the Hatter. 'Does *your* watch tell you what year it is?'

Literary Device

'"I breathe when I sleep" is the same thing as "I sleep when I breathe"!' is an example of **irony**. The Dormouse is always asleep. Hence, for him, breathing while sleeping is indeed the same as sleeping when he is breathing, rather than being two opposite things.

break the silence: (here) talk after a period of silence
meekly: quietly and gently

'Of course not,' Alice replied very readily, 'because it stays the same year for such a long time together.'

'Which is just the case with *mine*,' said the Hatter.

Alice felt dreadfully puzzled. 'I don't quite understand you,' she said, as politely as she could.

'Have you guessed the riddle yet?' the Hatter asked Alice.

'No, I give it up,' Alice replied. 'What's the answer?'

'I haven't the slightest idea,' said the Hatter.

'Nor I,' said the March Hare.

Alice sighed wearily. 'I think you might do something better with the time,' she said, 'than waste it in asking riddles that have no answers.'

Literary Device

- *Beat time* is an example of **pun**. The first meaning is keeping time while playing a musical instrument, while the second is physically beating someone.
- *He won't stand beating* is an example of **personification**. Time is being imagined here as a human being, who will not tolerate a beating.

'If you knew Time as well as I do,' said the Hatter, 'you wouldn't talk about wasting *it*. It's *Him*.'

'I don't know what you mean,' said Alice.

'I dare say you never even spoke to Time!' the Hatter said, tossing his head disrespectfully.

'Perhaps not,' Alice cautiously replied, 'but I know I have to beat time when I learn music.'

'He won't stand beating. Now, if you only kept on good terms with him, he'd do almost anything you liked with the clock. For instance, suppose it were nine o'clock in the morning, just time to begin lessons: round goes the clock in a twinkling! Half-past one, time for dinner!' said the Hatter.

'That would be grand, certainly,' said Alice thoughtfully. 'But then—I would not be hungry.'

'Not at first, perhaps,' said the Hatter. 'But you could keep it to half-past one as long as you liked.'

'Is that the way you manage?' Alice asked.

dreadfully: terribly
beat time: set a musical tempo or rhythm
grand: (here) wonderful

The Hatter shook his head mournfully. 'We quarrelled last March—just before he went mad, you know—' (pointing with his tea spoon at the March Hare) '—it was at the great concert given by the Queen of Hearts, and I had to sing

"Twinkle, twinkle, little bat!
How I wonder what you're at!"

You know the song, perhaps?'

'I've heard something like it,' said Alice.

The Hatter continued,

"Up above the world you fly,
Like a tea tray in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle—"

'Well, I'd hardly finished the first verse,' said the Hatter, 'when the Queen jumped up and bawled out, "He's murdering the time! Off with his head!"'

'How dreadfully wicked!' exclaimed Alice.

'And ever since then,' the Hatter went on in a sad tone, 'he won't do a thing I ask! It's always six o'clock now.'

A bright idea came into Alice's head. 'Is that the reason so many tea things are put out here?' she asked.

'Yes, that's it,' said the Hatter with a sigh. 'It's always tea-time, and we've no time to wash the things between whiles.'

'Then you keep moving around, I suppose?' said Alice.

'Exactly so,' said the Hatter: 'as the things get used up.'

'But what happens when you come to the beginning again?' Alice dared to ask.

'Suppose we change the subject,' the March Hare interrupted, yawning. 'I'm getting tired of this. I vote the young lady tells us a story.'

mournfully: sadly
concert: a musical presentation
bawled out: screamed at someone angrily
off with his head: chop off his head

About the Author

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (1832–1898), more popularly known as **Lewis Carroll**, was an English writer, mathematician, priest, and photographer. He is best known for his nonsense prose and poetry, including *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There* and *The Hunting of the Snark*. He often used the technique of word play in his writings which was widely appreciated.

COMPREHENSION

A. Read the dialogues from the story. Write down who said these words to whom and why.

Dialogue	Who said to whom	Why
1. *It wasn't very polite of you to sit down without being invited.*		
2. *It's very rude.*		
3. *I told you butter wouldn't suit the works!*		
4. *Have you guessed the riddle yet?*		
5. *You shouldn't have put it in with the bread-knife.*		
6. *Off with his head!*		

B. Answer the questions briefly.

1. Describe the scene which Alice saw when she came upon the tea party.
2. How did the creatures welcome Alice?
3. What was the first question the Hatter asked Alice? What riddle did he then ask her?
4. What manners did Alice try to teach the Hatter?
5. What song did the Hatter sing, and why did it seem familiar to Alice? Which famous song does it resemble?
6. What happened at the great concert given by the Queen of Hearts?
7. Why and how was the Hatter punished by Time?

C. Think and answer the questions.

1. You have read how the Hatter uses personification while speaking about Time. Give two other examples of personification from the story and explain them in your own words.
2. What are the various aspects of the story that makes it nonsensical or unreal? Mention instances from the story to justify your answer.

VOCABULARY

The writer often changes the order of words in phrases so that the two phrases sound similar but have the opposite meaning. This form of word play creates **humour**. For example:

"I breathe when I sleep" is the same thing as "I sleep when I breathe".

A. Read the sentences with the phrases in bold. The same words have been rearranged in each set of phrases. Choose the option which best explains the meaning of the phrases.

1. 'Then you should **say what you mean**,' the March Hare went on.

   'I do,' Alice hastily replied. 'At least—at least **I mean what I say**—that's the same thing, you know.'

a. Be sincere and truthful about what you say.

b. Be bold and forthright in your speech.

2. 'You might just as well say that "**I see what I eat**" is the same thing as "**I eat what I see**"!'

   a. I am watchful of the calories I take in.

   b. I eat anything I lay my eyes on.

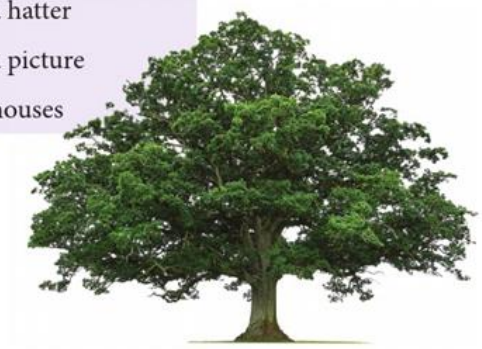
3. 'You might just as well say,' added the March Hare, 'that "**I like what I get**" is the same thing as "**I get what I like**"!'

   a. I am appreciative and grateful of what I receive.

   b. I buy whatever I like.

B. Complete the similes by matching the phrases in column A with those in column B.

Column A	Column B
1. as mad as	a. an oak
2. as old as	b. the hours
3. as safe as	c. a whistle
4. as sturdy as	d. two peas in a pod
5. as tough as	e. chalk and cheese
6. as patient as	f. the hills
7. as different as	g. leather
8. as pretty as	h. a hatter
9. as alike as	i. a picture
10. as clean as	j. houses



WRITING

You are the Queen of Hearts. Write an invitation to a tea party for your friends. The party should have an exciting theme.

Remember to include these details in your invite.

- Date, time and venue
- Details of the party theme
- Activities planned for the guests
- RSVP details: RSVP is the abbreviation for *répondez s'il vous plait* (pronounced *reponday sil voo play*) in French. It means *please reply*. It is usually written at the end of the invitation to request a response from the guests whether they would be attending the event or not. For this, the host's contact details are provided.

Read out your invite in the class.

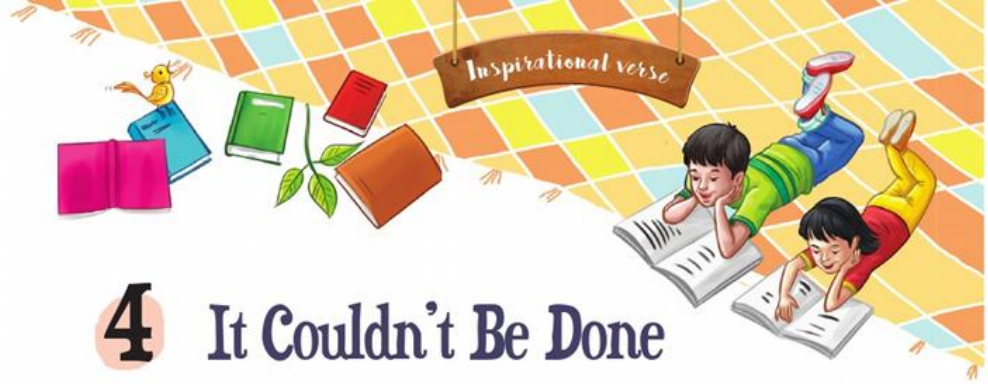
Read at leisure...

📖 *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There* by Lewis Carroll

This is the sequel to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. In the book, Alice again enters a fantastical world, this time by climbing through a mirror to enter it. *Through the Looking-Glass* includes well-known and celebrated verses such as *Jabberwocky* and *The Walrus and the Carpenter*.

📖 *The Hunting of the Snark* by Lewis Carroll

This is a nonsense literature poem. It explores the adventures of a strange crew of nine tradesmen and one beaver, who set off to find the snark (an imaginary animal).



4 It Couldn't Be Done

–Edgar Albert Guest

READING

We often give up a new task when faced with discouragement. This poem tries to open a whole new world of possibilities for us, so that we can find the possible within the impossible.

Literary Device

That couldn't be done, and he did it! This is an example of **paradox**, which is a self-contradictory statement that contains two opposite facts—something that couldn't be done, but was done.

chuckle: a quiet laugh
tackled: dealt with
scoffed: made fun of
quiddit: intentional misspelling of *quibbling* which means to argue about something unimportant
prophesy: foretell what shall happen in the future
assail: worry, attack

Somebody said that it couldn't be done
But he with a chuckle replied
That 'maybe it couldn't,' but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it!

Somebody scoffed: 'Oh, you'll never do that;
At least no one ever has done it;'
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat
And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
There are thousands to prophesy failure,
There are thousands to point out to you one by one,
The dangers that wait to assail you.

But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,
Just take off your coat and go to it;
Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing
That 'cannot be done,' and you'll do it.

Literary Device

He started to sing... and he did it! These lines have been repeated several times in the poem. It is an example of refrain.

Refrain is a line or a group of lines that are repeated at regular intervals, in different stanzas. While giving a rhythmic effect to the poem, it also emphasises an idea through repetition.

About the Poet

Edgar Albert Guest (1881–1959) was an English-born American poet. He was known as the People's Poet as his verses often had a motivating and positive view of everyday life. He nearly penned 11,000 poems, which appeared in more than 300 newspapers and 20 books, including *A Heap o' Livin'* and *Just Folks*. Of his poems, he said, 'I take simple everyday things that happen to me, and I figure it happens to a lot of other people, and I make simple rhymes out of them.'

COMPREHENSION

A. Answer the questions from the first stanza briefly.

1. What did *somebody* say?
2. What was the man's reaction? How did he reply to the challenge?
3. Which phrase tells us that the man is ready to face the task?

4. What expressions did he exhibit while trying the impossible?
5. Explain *tackled the thing.*

B. Answer the questions from the second stanza briefly.

1. Pick out a synonym for *mocked.*
2. How did somebody discourage the man?
3. What two things did the man do before beginning the task?
4. What were some of the indications of his confidence?
5. Why do you think he started to sing?

C. Answer the questions from the third stanza briefly.

1. Find a synonym for *foretell.*
2. What do most people prophesise when someone tries something new?
3. What do they warn about?
4. How can one prepare oneself before tackling a difficult task?
5. What should be our mood while taking on a new challenge?

VOCABULARY

A. Read the sentences. The words in bold have more than one meaning. Choose the correct meaning of the words and rewrite the sentences.

1. *bend under pressure/strapped*
   a. The baby seat was **buckled** to the rear seat of the car.
   .....
   b. The donkey **buckled** under the heavy load on its back.
   .....
2. *discover/remains*
   a. The dog was trying to **trace** the scent of the bank robbers.
   .....
   b. There was no **trace** of milk in the container.
   .....

3. *resolved/attacked*

   a. The wrestler **tackled** his opponent and he fell on his back.

   .....

   b. Even though she was just a child, she **tackled** the problem calmly.

   .....

4. *removed/left the ground*

   a. The cook **took off** his apron and hung it on the hook.

   .....

   b. The aeroplane **took off** on time.

   .....

5. *short period of time/pieces*

   a. I will go out for a **bit**.

   .....

   b. The **bits** of paper were scattered on the floor.

   .....

B. Use these idiomatic expressions in sentences of your own. Look up a dictionary if required. One has been done for you.

1. A blessing in disguise

   Losing the job was a blessing in disguise since I ended up finding a much better one.

2. Cross the bridge when you come to it.

   .....

3. Actions speak louder than words.

   .....

4. Burn the midnight oil.

   .....

5. Don't count your chickens before they hatch.

   .....

6. Every cloud has a silver lining.

   .....

7. Hit the nail on the head.

.....

8. Have a taste of your own medicine.

.....

9. Don't put all your eggs in one basket.

.....

10. Miss the boat.

.....

11. Two wrongs don't make a right.

.....

12. Good things come to those who wait.

.....

WRITING

Read this excerpt from *See It Through* by Edgar Albert Guest, in which he tells us to face our troubles bravely.

When you're up against a trouble,
Meet it squarely, face to face,
Lift your chin and set your shoulders,
Plant your feet and take a brace,
When it's vain to try to dodge it,
Do the best that you can do.
You may fail, but you may conquer,
See it through!

Using the poet's advice in the verse, write a letter to a friend or sibling urging them to face their problems bravely (whatever those might be) since failure comes from within.

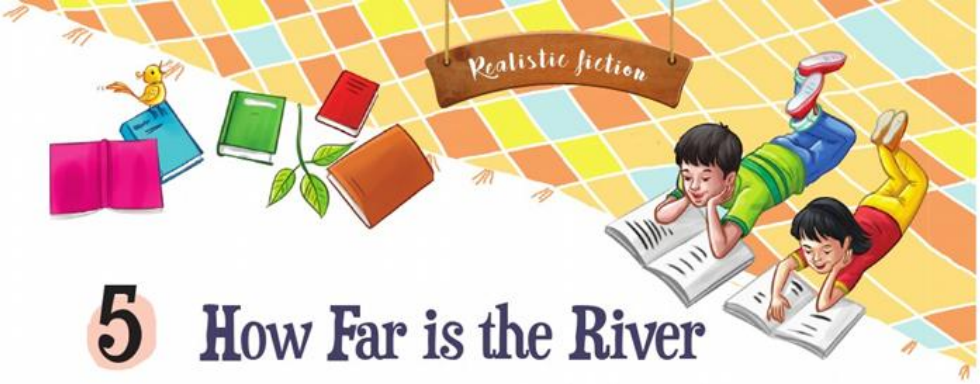
Read at leisure...

📖 *Don't Quit* by Edgar Albert Guest

The poem encourages us to never give up. It warns us of the uphill tasks that cause us much anxiety and pain; but the poet wants us to rest awhile rather than quit the difficult journey. We need to move slowly yet steadily to capture the victor's cup.

📖 *Start Where You Stand* by Berton Braley

The poem conveys that failures in the past should not stop us from embracing the future. Our hard work today can start where we stand. The world does not care about one's old defeats, and thus we must also not despair over yesterday.



5 How Far is the River

–Ruskin Bond

READING

Have you ever had the good fortune of living near mountains and caves, or rivers and valleys? Have you ever had the curiosity to explore these wonders of nature? This story deals with the curiosity of a little boy who wants to explore and enjoy the pleasures of nature while trying to 'find a river' all by himself.

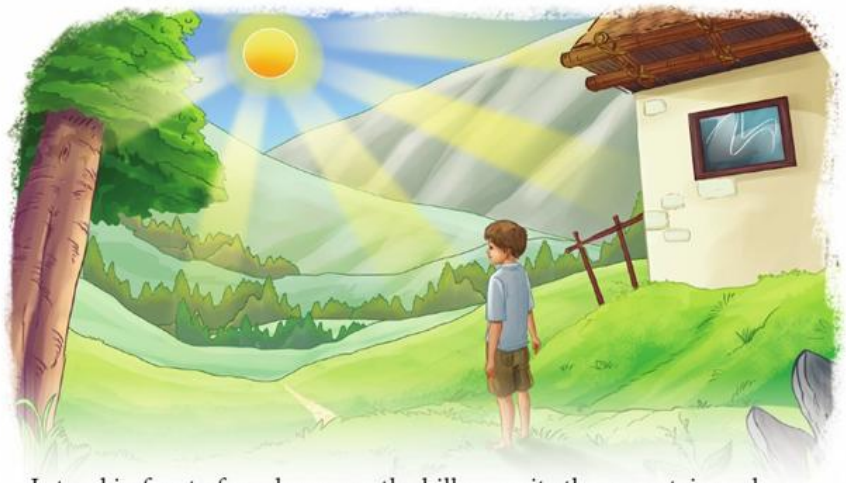
Living in the hills, or near the great forests, or near the sea, does of course make it easier to engage with the natural world. As a boy and then as a young man, a sense of adventure often took me down unknown roads, to experiences that were often memorable. Encounters with the larger animals, such as the leopard, were rare. But in the hills there is always something new waiting for you around the next bend. For, at every bend the entire vista is altered, and our perspective changes too. When we walk close to nature, we come to a better understanding of life; for, it is from the natural world that we first emerged and to which we still belong.

* * *

engage: (here) become involved with
encounters: face to face experiences
rare: uncommon
vista: a pleasing view
altered: changed
perspective: viewpoint, attitude

Between the boy and the river was a mountain. I was a small boy, and it was a small river, but the mountain was big.

The thickly forested mountain hid the river, but I knew it was there and what it looked like; I had never seen the river with my own eyes, but from the villagers I had heard of it, of the fish in its waters, of its rocks and currents and waterfalls, and it only remained for me to touch the water and know it personally.



I stood in front of our house on the hill opposite the mountain and gazed across the valley, dreaming of the river. I was barefooted, not because I couldn't afford shoes, but because I felt free with my feet bare, because I liked the feel of warm stones and cool grass, because not wearing shoes saved me the trouble of taking them off.

It was eleven o'clock in the morning and I knew my parents wouldn't be home till evening. There was a loaf of bread I could take with me, and on the way I might find some fruit. Here was the chance I had been waiting for: it would not come again for a long time, because it was seldom that my father and mother visited friends for the entire day. If I came back before dark, they wouldn't know where I had been.

I went into the house and wrapped the loaf of bread in a newspaper. Then I closed all the doors and windows.

The path to the river dropped steeply into the valley, then rose and went round the big mountain. It was frequently used by the villagers, woodcutters, milkmen, shepherds, mule-drivers, but there were no villages beyond the mountain or near the river.

I passed a woodcutter and asked him how far it was to the river. He was a short, powerful man, with a creased and weathered face, and muscles that stood out in hard lumps.

gazed: looked intently, stared
seldom: hardly ever, rarely
steeply: sharply
creased: with deep wrinkles
weathered: worn or seasoned by the weather
lumps: (here) mounds of muscles

'Seven miles,' he said. 'Why do you want to know?'

'I am going there,' I said.

'Alone?'

'Of course.'

'It will take you three hours to reach it, and then you have to come back. It will be getting dark, and it is not an easy road.'

'But I'm a good walker,' I said, though I had never walked further than the two miles between our house and my school. I left the woodcutter on the path, and continued down the hill.

It was a dizzy, winding path, and I slipped once or twice and slid into a bush or down a slope of slippery pine needles. The hill was covered with lush green ferns, the trees were entangled in creepers, and a great wild dahlia would suddenly rear its golden head from the leaves and ferns.

Soon I was in the valley, and the path straightened out and then began to rise. I met a girl who was coming from the opposite direction. She held a scythe with which she had been cutting grass, and there were rings in her nose and ears and her arms were covered with heavy bangles. The bangles made music when she moved her wrists. It was as though her hands spoke a language of their own.

'How far is it to the river?' I asked.

dizzy: giddy, causes you to lose balance
winding: twisting and turning
lush: rich
entangled: became twisted together with
scythe: an agricultural hand tool for cutting grass or reaping crops

The girl had probably never been to the river, or she may have been thinking of another one, because she said, 'Twenty miles,' without any hesitation.

I laughed and ran down the path. A parrot screeched suddenly, flew low over my head, a flash of blue and green. It took the course of the path, and I followed its dipping flight, running until the path rose, and the bird disappeared amongst the trees.

A trickle of water came down the hillside, and I stopped to drink. The water was cold and sharp but very refreshing. But I was soon thirsty again. The sun was striking the side of the hill, and the dusty path became hotter, the stones scorching my feet. I was sure I had covered half the distance: I had been walking for over an hour.

Presently I saw another boy ahead of me, driving a few goats down the path.

'How far is the river?' I asked.

He smiled and said, 'Oh, not far, just round the next hill and straight down.'

Feeling hungry, I unwrapped my loaf of bread and broke it in two, offering one half to the boy. We sat on the hillside and ate in silence.

When we had finished, we walked on together and began talking; I did not notice the smarting of my feet, and the heat of the sun, the distance I had covered and the distance I was yet to cover. But after some time my companion had to take another path, and once more I was on my own.

I missed the village boy; I looked up and down the mountain path but no one else was in sight. My own home was hidden from view by the side of the mountain, and there was no sign of the river, I began to feel discouraged. If someone had been

Literary Device

- *A parrot **screeched** suddenly.*
- *I followed its **dipping** flight.*
- *A **trickle** of water came down the hillside.*

These are examples of onomatopoeia. **Onomatopoeic** words sound similar to the noises they refer to.

hesitation: the action of pausing before saying or doing something
screeched: made an unpleasant high-pitched noise
trickle: a small flow
refreshing: energising
scorching: extremely hot, burning
smarting: (here) hurting

with me, I would not have faltered; but alone, I was conscious of my fatigue and isolation.

But I had come more than half way, and I couldn't turn back; I had to see the river. If I failed, I would always be a little ashamed of the experience. So I walked on, past stone huts and terraced fields, until there were no more fields or huts, only forest and sun and loneliness. There were no men, and no sign of man's influence—only trees and rocks and grass and small flowers—and silence.

fatigue: tiredness
isolation: (here) loneliness
terraced: a form of landscaping where a piece of sloping land is cut into a series of levels or steps, for more effective farming
influence: effect, impact
impressive: admirable
gasped: caught one's breath with an open mouth (with surprise)
plunge: (here) jump, dive

The silence was impressive and a little frightening. There was no movement, except for the bending of grass beneath my feet, and the circling of a hawk against the blind blue of the sky.

Then, as I rounded a sharp bend, I heard the sound of water.

I gasped with surprise and happiness, and began to run. I slipped and stumbled, but I kept on running, until I was able to plunge into the snow-cold mountain water.

And the water was blue and white and wonderful.

About the Author

Ruskin Bond (born 1934) is an Indian author of British origin. He has written over 500 short stories, novels, poems, and essays, including more than 50 books for children. His works display his love for nature, particularly the mountains. He has also been given the Sahitya Academy Award, the Padma Shri, and the Padma Bhushan. *The Room on the Roof, Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra, The Blue Umbrella, A Flight of Pigeons* and *The Night Train at Deoli* are some of his well-known works.

COMPREHENSION

A. Put a cross (✗) next to the option that is incorrect.

1. It is easy to be in touch with the natural world if
   a. we live in the hills.
   b. we live near the forest.
   c. we live near the sea.
   d. we live in an industrialised city.
2. As a boy, the author was extremely adventurous as he
   a. believed that travelling for adventure is safe.
   b. liked to have rare encounters with leopards.
   c. tried to develop new perspectives.
   d. developed a better understanding of the natural world.
3. The boy was unable to see or reach the river because
   a. he was small.
   b. a high mountain stood between his house and the river.
   c. the river was small, but with currents and waterfalls.
   d. a thickly forested mountain hid the river.
4. The little boy was barefoot because
   a. he could not afford shoes.
   b. he enjoyed the feel of warm stones under his feet.
   c. he enjoyed the feel of the cool grass under his soles.
   d. it saved him the trouble of removing his shoes.

5. He had heard so much about the river. He finally took the chance of visiting it because
   a. he had enough bread to eat on the way.
   b. he knew he could find fruit on the way.
   c. he knew the river would dry up in the summer time.
   d. he knew it was a rare chance as his parents would be out the whole day visiting friends.
6. The path round the big mountain was frequently used by
   a. the villagers on the other side of the mountain.
   b. the villagers and the milkmen.
   c. the woodcutters and the shepherds.
   d. the mule-drivers.

B. Answer the questions briefly.

1. According to the author, why is it important to walk close to nature?
2. Why did the boy have a desire to know the river *personally*?
3. What three things did the woodcutter remind the boy of? What was the intention behind his reminders?
4. What type of vegetation and things did the boy see?
5. Describe the girl whose hands spoke a language of their own.
6. What were some of the problems the young adventurer faced?
7. What made the last part of his journey easy?
8. What reminded him of his fatigue and isolation?

C. Think and answer the questions.

1. Why do you think the woodcutter looked powerful and muscular?
2. Why do you think the boy found the silence a little impressive and a little frightening?
3. Based on the little adventurer's conversations with the woodcutter, the girl with a scythe, and the young goatherd; and with reference to the other details provided in the story, draw up a character sketch of the boy who finally found the river.
4. The descriptions included in the story has the ability to create a picture in your mind. Pick out at least five examples of imagery from the story.

VOCABULARY

A. Match the environment words in column A with their meanings in column B.

Column A	Column B
1. Eco-friendly	a. Damage to or destruction of the natural environment, especially as caused by human activity such as pollution or war
2. Ecotourism	b. Study of the relations of organisms to one another and to their physical surroundings
3. Ecofreak	c. Small, boxy, fuel-efficient, economical cars with few luxuries and a low sticker price
4. Ecocide	d. Someone who uses violence in order to stop organisations that cause harm to the environment
5. Ecology	e. The business of creating and selling holidays that give people the chance to learn about natural environment, and cause as little damage to the environment as possible
6. Ecoterrorist	f. A person who is extremely concerned about preserving the environment
7. Econobox	g. Designed to cause as little harm as possible to the environment

B. Cross out one word from each row that does not belong to the world of animals.

1. igloo	hoof	gosling	neigh	coop	tadpole
2. hive	buck	ram	mare	claw	vegetarian
3. doe	stag	spiderling	valley	quack	wing
4. scales	ewe	auditorium	bark	stallion	tusk
5. queen	sow	bray	pen	hunter	tentacles
6. antler	vessel	fin	antennae	beak	croak

WRITING

Imagine you are the small boy from the story who took a plunge into the snow-cold mountain water. Write a diary entry on what happened afterwards.

You may include these points in your diary.

- Did you face any difficulties returning home?
- Did you meet anyone on your way back?
- Did you get lost?
- Did your parents find out about your adventure? If so, what did they say?
- Did you learn a lesson from your experience?

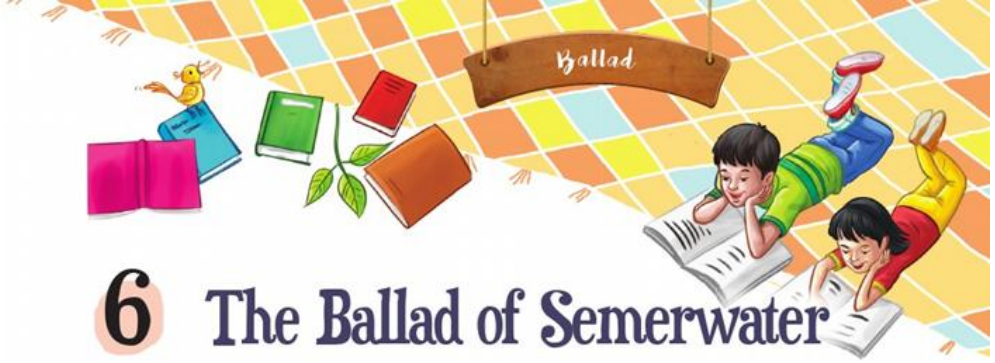
Read at leisure...

The Room on the Roof by Ruskin Bond

This novel takes you on an adventurous journey of the countryside seen through the eyes of a 16-year-old Anglo-Indian boy called Rusty. He runs away from his home and moves out into the unseen Indian territory.

The Blue Umbrella by Ruskin Bond

This novel is set in Garhwal and revolves around a little girl named Biniya. She trades her leopard claw pendant to acquire a blue umbrella from one of the tourists. The beautiful blue umbrella makes everybody jealous of her and becomes the central point of her life.



6 The Ballad of Semerwater

–Sir William Watson

READING

Legends often become part of a country's history or culture. The legend of Semerwater is that of a beggar, who was turned away from a prosperous city, and his curse: 'Semerwater rise, Semerwater sink, and bury the town, all save the house where they gave me food and drink.' Read this ballad to find out more.

Deep asleep, deep asleep,
Deep asleep it lies,
The still lake of Semerwater
Under the still skies.

And many a fathom
Many a fathom
Many a fathom below,
In a king's tower and a
queen's bower
The fishes come and go.

Once there stood by Semerwater
A mickle town and tall;
King's tower and queen's bower
And the wakeman on the wall.

Literary Device

In a king's tower and a queen's bower is an example of **internal rhyme** and **imagery**, with words *tower* rhyming with *bower*, and also creating visual pictures of royalty.

Semerwater: the second largest natural lake in England
fathom: a measurement of 6 feet, used to measure the depth of water
bower: a shady, leafy shelter in a garden
mickle: Scottish word for *great*
wakeman: watchman

Literary Device

- *Kings's tower and queen's bower* is an example of **refrain**.
- *He cursed aloud that city proud* This is an example of **transferred epithet** where pride has been associated not with a person, but a city.

Came a beggar halt and sore:
'I faint for lack of bread!'
King's tower and queen's bower
Cast him forth unfed.

He knocked at the door of eller's cot,
The eller's cot in the dale.
They gave him of their oatcake,
They gave him of their ale.

He cursed aloud that city proud,
He cursed it in its pride;
He has cursed it into Semerwater
There to bide.

King's tower and queen's bower,
And a mickle town and tall;
By glimmer of scale and gleam of fin
Folk have seen them all.

King's tower and queen's bower,
And weed and reed in the gloom;
And a lost city in Semerwater,
Deep asleep till doom.

sore: (here) in pain
cast: (here) threw
unfed: without food
eller: name for someone who lives by an alder tree
cot: (here) cottage
dale: valley
oatcake: a thin savoury biscuit made of oats
ale: a type of drink
cursed: used magic words to bring bad luck to someone
bide: remain, stay
glimmer: shine
scale: bony plates protecting the skin of fish
gleam: bright shine
fin: a thin vertical part sticking out the sides of a fish
folk: people
weed: a wild, unwanted plant
reed: tall plants like grasses which grow together in marshy areas
gloom: darkness
doom: destruction

About the Poet

Sir John William Watson (1858–1935) was an English author of lyrical and political verse. He was born in Yorkshire. He was a well known literary journalist in London. His reputation was established with the publication of *Wordsworth's Grave* (1891), *Lachrymae Musarum* (1892), his elegies on the death of Tennyson, and his coronation ode for King Edward VII.

COMPREHENSION

A. Complete the blanks with suitable words in reference to the poem.

Semerwater is the second largest natural lake in North Yorkshire, England, and is known for its myths and ..... .
One of the legends of Semerwater tells of a ....., who once visited a ..... city along the lake. He was extremely ..... and even ..... after his travels. At the palace he lamented that he was about to ..... for ..... but he was ..... away unfed. Despite being rich, the ..... and the ..... failed to welcome him hospitably or even ..... the poor man. The beggar helplessly moved on.

He then went to an ..... cottage in the ..... . Here he was given ..... to eat and ..... to drink and a place to rest. The next morning he ..... the city for its ..... with the following words: 'Semerwater rise, Semerwater sink, and bury the town, all save the house where they gave me food and drink.'

The prosperous city could not feed a pauper but a humble commoner shared his food with the beggar. The poor man took ..... by drowning the city in the waters of ....., and cursing it to ..... . The proud city was lost forever in ..... under the lake, drowned in ..... and reeds. Now it is visited only by ..... .

The legend has been told and passed down the generations in stories and verse. One of the most famous adaptations is a poem by ..... called *The Ballad of Semerwater*.

B. Answer the questions briefly.

1. Pick out an example each of alliteration, repetition, and rhyme from the first stanza.
2. What is *fathom* a measure of? Why has *many a fathom* been repeated thrice?
3. Why do you think a wakeman was standing on the city walls?
4. Which two figures of speech are found in the use of *tower* and *bower*?
5. The town was big and prosperous. Which words reveal this in the third stanza?
6. Which two things tell us that the poor man was in need of help?
7. Pick out the line that tells us that the royalty did not grant the beggar's simple request.
8. Who helped the hungry man?

C. Think and answer the questions.

1. *He has cursed it into Semerwater there to bide.* What was the curse? Was it right for the man to curse the city and take revenge?
2. The wealthy king and the queen had cast out the poor and hungry beggar. What insight does the poem reveal about human nature through this situation?

VOCABULARY

Read the sentences. Determine whether each is a simile or metaphor. Then explain which two things are being compared. One has been done for you.

1. You are my guardian angel.

   This is an example of metaphor.

   The speaker is comparing his friend to an angel.

2. She felt like a fish out of water at her new school.

   This is an example of .....

   .....

3. The criminal was overwhelmed by the avalanche of questions.

   This is an example of .....

   .....

4. The workers felt like a puppet on a string.

   This is an example of .....

   .....

5. The poor people are crushed by the dark night of ignorance.

   This is an example of .....

   .....

6. The winter wind cut through us like a sharp sword.

   This is an example of .....

   .....

7. Her voice was as lively as a bubbling brook.

   This is an example of .....

   .....

8. The king sat proud behind his cruel wall of words.

   This is an example of .....

   .....

9. The white cruiser was like a pearl in the harbour.

   This is an example of .....

   .....

10. Your presence is water on a withered plant.

    This is an example of .....

    .....

WRITING

Imagine you were one of the residents of the town of Semerwater when it was cursed. Write a narrative essay on the beggar's appearance in your town and what happened after the king and the queen refused him food and drink.

Read at leisure...

- *The Ballad of East and West* by Rudyard Kipling

  The poem is about an English officer and an Afghan horse-thief, Kamal, and their growing friendship as they respect each other's courage and honour.

- *La Belle Dame sans Merci* by John Keats

  The French title is translated as *The Beautiful Lady without Mercy*. It is a ballad of love and death in a sad wintry landscape.

7 The Wrong House

–James N. Young

READING

We seldom consider thefts and criminals as funny. This is a humorous account of two thieves, who think they are very good at brainwork. However, their genius lands them in a soup. This story gives a unique insight into the mindsets of two partners in crime versus the intelligence of police authorities—where both are trying to outwit each other.

The night was dark. And the house was dark. Dark—and silent. The two men ran towards it quietly. They slipped quickly through the dark bushes, which surrounded the house. They reached the porch, ran quickly up the steps, kneeled down, breathing heavily, in the dark shadows. They waited—listening.

Silence. Perfect silence. Then—out of the blackness—a whisper: 'We can't stay out here… Take this suitcase…Let me try those keys. We've got to get in!'

Literary Device

And the house was dark. Dark... **Rhetorical repetition** of the word *dark* heightens the mystery.

Ten—twenty—thirty seconds. With one of the keys the one man opened the door. Silently, the two men entered the house, closed the door behind them, locked it.

Whispering, they discussed the situation. They wondered if they had awakened anyone in the house.

porch: American word for *veranda*

'Let's have a look at this place.' 'Careful, Hasty!' 'Oh, there is not anybody awake!' And the soft rays of a flashlight swept the room.

It was a large room. A living room. Rugs, carefully rolled, lay piled on one side. The furniture—chairs, tables, couches—was covered by sheets. Dust lay like a light snow over everything.

Literary Device

- *Dust lay like a light snow over everything.* The **simile** strangely connects two dissimilar things.
- *Yes, Hasty Hogan and Blackie Burns were in luck.* The **idiomatic** usage *in luck* relays the good fortune of the convicts.

The man who held the flashlight spoke first. 'Well, Blackie,' he said, 'We're in luck. Looks as if the family's away.'

'Yeah, gone for the summer, I guess. We better make sure, though. Huh.' Together they searched the house. They went on tiptoe through every room. There could be no doubt about it. The family was away. Had been away for weeks.

Yes, Hasty Hogan and Blackie Burns were in luck. Only once in the past ten days had their luck failed them. It had been with them when they made their big robbery—their truly magnificent robbery on the Coast.

It had been with them during their thousand-mile trip eastward, by automobile. It had been with them every moment—but one.

rugs: small carpets
couches: sofas
magnificent: (here) perfect
automobile: (American usage) car

That moment had come just one hour before. It came when Blackie, driving the car, ran over a policeman. And Blackie, thinking of the suitcase at Hasty's feet, had driven away. Swiftly.

There had been a chase, of course. A wild crazy chase. And when a bullet had punctured the gasoline tank, they had had to abandon the car. But luck or no luck, here they were. Alone, and without a car, in a completely strange town. But safe and sound—with the suitcase.

The suitcase lay in the centre of the table, in the centre of the room. In the suitcase, neat little package on neat little package, lay nearly three hundred thousand dollars.

'Listen,' said Mr Hogan. 'We have to get a car. Quick, too. And we cannot steal one—and use it. It's too dangerous. We have to buy one. That means that we have to wait until the stores open. That will be about eight o'clock in this town.'

'But what are we going to do with that?' And Mr Burns pointed to the suitcase.

'Hide it right here. Sure! Why not? It's much safer here than with us—until we get a car.'

And so they hid the suitcase. They carried it down to the cellar. Buried it deep in some coal, which lay in a corner of the cellar. After this, just before dawn, they slipped out.

'Say, Blackie,' Mr Hogan remarked as they walked down the street, 'The name of the gentleman we are visiting is Mr Samuel W. Rogers.'

'How do you know?'

'Saw it on some of the books. He's surely got a wonderful library, hasn't he?'

The automobile salesrooms opened at 8 o'clock, as Mr Hogan had supposed. Shortly before nine, Mr Hogan and Mr Burns had a car. A very nice

Literary Device

But safe and sound...
The **alliteration** allows for fluid reading. (This is also an example of collocation.)

punctured: made a hole in
gasoline: American word for *petrol*
abandon: leave
cellar: a room underneath a building, often used for storing things

little car. Very quiet. Very inconspicuous. And very speedy. The dealer lent them his license plates and away they rode.

Three blocks from the house, they stopped. Mr Hogan got out. Walked toward the house. He had just to go around to the rear, he thought, and slip in.

Fifty yards from the house he stopped. Stared, swore softly. The front door was open. The window shades were up. The family had returned!

Well, what bad luck. And what could they do? Break into the cellar that night, and pick up the suitcase? No—too dangerous. Mr Hogan would have to think of something.

'Leave it to me, kid.' He told Mr Burns. 'You drive the car. I'll do the special brainwork. Let's find a telephone. Quick.'

Ten minutes later, Mr Hogan was consulting a telephone directory. Yes, there it was—Samuel W. Rogers, Plainview 6329. A moment later he was talking to the surprised Mr Rogers.

'Hello,' he began, 'Is this Mr Rogers—Mr Samuel Rogers?'

'Yes, yes!' came over the wire. 'Yes, this is Mr Rogers.'

Mr Hogan cleared his throat. 'Mr Rogers,' he said—and his tone was sharp, official, impressive—'this is Headquarters, Police Headquarters, talking. I am Simpson. Sergeant Simpson, of the detective division.'

inconspicuous: unnoticeable
consulting: (here) referring
wire: (here) telephone

'The Chief—the Chief of Police, you know,'—here Mr Hogan lowered his voice a little—'has ordered me to get in touch with you. He's sending me out with one of our men to see you.'

'Am I in trouble of some kind?' asked Mr Rogers.

'No, no, no. Nothing like that. But I have something of great importance to talk to you about.'

'Very well,' came the voice of Mr Rogers. 'I'll wait for you.'

'And, Mr Rogers' Mr Hogan cautioned, 'please keep quiet about this. Don't say anything to anybody. You'll understand why when I see you.'

On the way back to the house, Mr Hogan explained his idea to Mr Burns.

Within ten minutes *Sergeant Simpson* and *Detective Johnson* were conversing with the surprised Mr Rogers. Mr Rogers was a small man. Rather insignificant. He had pale blue eyes. Not much of a chin. A funny little face. He was nervous—a badly frightened man.

Mr Hogan told the whole story. Somewhat changed. Very much changed. And Mr Rogers was surprised, but delighted.

He accompanied Mr Hogan to the cellar. And together they dug up to the suitcase. Took it to the living room, opened it, so that it had not been touched—that it really did hold a small fortune. Bills, bills, bills!

Mr Hogan closed the suitcase.

'And now, Mr Rogers,' he announced, in this best official manner, 'Johnson and I must run along. The Chief wants a report—quick. We have to catch the rest of the robbers. I'll keep in touch with you.'

He picked up the suitcase and rose. Mr Burns also rose. Mr Rogers also rose. The trio walked to the door. Mr Rogers opened in. 'Come in boys,' he said pleasantly. And in walked three men. Large men. Strong men. Men in police uniform who without fear, stared at Mr Hasty Hogan and Mr Blackie Burns.

cautioned: warned
conversing: talking
delighted: pleased
accompanied: went along with
bills: American word for *banknotes*
official: formal, officer-like
trio: threesome

Literary Device

'It just happens that I am the Chief of Police!'
The surprise ending at the end puts an **ironic** twist to the tale.

'What does this mean Mr Rogers?' asked Mr Hogan.

'It's quite simple,' said Mr Rogers. 'It just happens that I am the Chief of Police!'

About the Author

James N. Young was an American author, who worked as a newspaper reporter in Baltimore and Los Angeles. During World War I, he served in France. After the war, Young worked for three decades as an editor of *Collier's* magazine.

COMPREHENSION

A. Correct the statements with reference to the story you have read.

1. The clothes in the bedroom were carefully rolled, and lay piled on one side. The furniture such as, chairs, tables and couches were covered with dust. These were some indications that the family was away.
2. The single occasion during the previous days where the luck of Mr Hasty Hogan and Mr Blackie Burns had failed them was, when Hasty, while driving, ran over a pedestrian; and instead of stopping, Blackie had driven away swiftly. However in the police chase, a bullet had broken their windshield so they had had to abandon the car.
3. Hasty and Blackie, together, searched the house by sweeping their flashlight across all the rooms.
4. They decided to hide the suitcase in the attic, burying it deep in the cardboard box which was lying in the corner.
5. 'The Chief—the Chief of Police, you know,'—here Mr Burns lowered his voice a little—'has ordered me to get in touch with you. He's sending me out with one of our men to see you.'
6. The three men were invited into the house by Mr Hogan since he happened to be the real Chief of Police!

B. Answer the questions briefly.

1. 'Let's have a look at this place.' 'Careful, Hasty!' 'Oh, there is not anybody awake!' 'We're in luck. Looks as if the family's away.' What does the conversation reveal about the two men who broke into the house?
2. In which two instances had luck been favourable to the two thieves?
3. 'And we cannot steal one—and use it. It's too dangerous. We have to buy one.' What purchase was the speaker talking about? What had happened to the previous one? Why could they not just steal one?
4. 'But what are we going to do with that?' What was in *that*, and how did they get it? What did the duo do with it?
5. 'The name of the gentleman we are visiting is Mr Samuel W. Rogers.' How did Hogan guess the name of the owner of the house? What does it tell us about him?
6. Which character do you find most interesting and why?
7. What did Mr Hogan and Mr Burns' car purchase reveal about its new owners?
8. *Fifty yards from the house Hasty stopped.* What made him realise that the residents of the house Plainview 6329 had returned?

C. Think and answer the questions.

1. 'Leave it to me, kid. You drive the car. I'll do the special brainwork.' What was Hasty's plan?
2. 'Please keep quiet about this. Don't say anything to anybody.' Why did Sergeant Simpson of the detective division advise Samuel Roger not to talk about the phone call?
3. Who were the two imposters pretending to be? Who were they actually?
4. Why was Mr Rogers surprised, but delighted when Hogan told the whole story, somewhat changed from the real truth?
5. What did Mr Samuel Rogers look like? What was ironic about his appearance?

VOCABULARY

A. Match the *crime* words with their meanings.

Crime word	Meaning
1. alibi	a. to decide officially in a court of law that someone is guilty of a crime
2. burglar	b. the action of illegally copying a document, signature, banknote, or work of art
3. convict	c. robber, housebreaker
4. delinquent	d. a claim or cover-up that someone who is thought to have committed a crime was elsewhere when the crime happened
5. forgery	e. committing the crime of getting money by deceiving people or faking to be someone one is not
6. fraud	f. a young person committing a crime
7. guilt	g. the punishment or judgement assigned to a defendant found guilty by a court, or fixed by law for a particular offence
8. rehabilitate	h. a person who sees an event, typically a crime or accident, take place
9. sentence	i. a person who deliberately destroys or damages property belonging to others
10. smuggler	j. the feeling of having committed an offence or crime
11. vandal	k. someone who takes things or people to, or from, a place secretly and illegally
12. witness	l. to reform a criminal

B. Read the sentences with the phrases in bold. Then use the idioms/phrasal verbs in sentences of your own.

1. The two thieves decided to **break into** the house to hide their suitcase.

   .....

2. Students can **make or break** their life by the choices they make.

   .....

3. The convict decided to reform and make a **clean break** from his past life.

   .....

4. ABC Channel was the first to **break the news**.

   .....

5. The sportsman had a **break down** after the exhaustive sports meet.

   .....

6. Large chunks of ice **broke loose** from the ice shelf due to global warming.

   .....

7. The guard decided to **break open** the door.

   .....

8. There was a **break out** of malaria after the floods.

   .....

9. A series of games were used to **break the ice** and make the newcomers comfortable.

   .....

10. Promise me you would never **break your word**.

    .....

WRITING

Mr Hogan told the whole story. Somewhat changed. Very much changed. **Write an interesting story that Hasty Hogan must have created as part of his brainwork to impress and delight Mr Samuel Rogers.**

Read at leisure...

📖 *Just Lather, That's All* by Hernando Téllez

This short story is a monologue delivered by the narrator—the owner of a barbershop. The barber has secretly become an informant for a band of rebels. When a brutal military captain asks for a shave, the barber must decide whether to kill the captain or let him go free.

📖 *The Adventure of the Yellow Face* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

The story begins when Holmes and Watson are out for a walk; but when they return, they find that a client has come and gone in their absence, leaving behind only his pipe. Holmes makes a series of deductions, just by looking at the pipe, to arrive at the identity of the person to whom it belongs.

8 The Spider and the Fly

–Mary Howitt

READING

Were you told bedtime stories, like Little Red Riding Hood? Was it as a precaution to keep you wary of strangers? This poem is a dialogue between a clever spider who tries to lure an innocent fly by flattering her about her beauty. Read on to find out if the Spider was successful in its evil plan.

'Will you walk into my parlour?' said the Spider to the Fly,
'Tis the prettiest little parlour that ever you did spy;
The way into my parlour is up a winding stair,
And I've a many curious things to show when you are there.'

'Oh no, no,' said the little Fly, 'to ask me is in vain,
For who goes up your winding stair can ne'er come down again.'

'I'm sure you must be weary, dear, with soaring up so high;
Will you rest upon my little bed?' said the Spider to the Fly.
'There are pretty curtains drawn around; the sheets are fine and thin,
And if you like to rest awhile, I'll snugly tuck you in!'

Literary Device

winding stair
This uses vivid **imagery** to describe the gossamer web of the Spider.

parlour: a living or drawing room
winding: twisting
in vain: without success
weary: tired, exhausted
soaring: flying, rising high up in the air
snugly: comfortably

'Oh no, no,' said the little Fly, 'for I've often heard it said,
They never, never wake again, who sleep upon your bed!'

Said the cunning Spider to the Fly, 'Dear friend what can I do,
To prove the warm affection I've always felt for you?
I have within my pantry, good store of all that's nice;
I'm sure you're very welcome—will you please to take a slice?'

'Oh no, no,' said the little Fly, 'kind Sir, that cannot be,
I've heard what's in your pantry, and I do not wish to see!'

'Sweet creature!' said the Spider, 'you're witty and you're wise,
How handsome are your gauzy wings, how brilliant are your eyes!
I've a little looking-glass upon my parlour shelf,
If you'll step in one moment, dear, you shall behold yourself.'

'I thank you, gentle sir,' she said, 'for what you're pleased to say,
And bidding you good morning now, I'll call another day.'

The Spider turned around, and went into his den,
For well he knew the silly Fly would soon come back again:
So he wove a subtle web, in a little corner sly,
And set his table ready, to dine upon the Fly.

Literary Device

You're witty and you're wise is an example of **alliteration**.

pantry: a small room or cupboard in which food is stored
witty: (here) smart
gauzy: translucent or sheer
subtle: not immediately obvious

Then he came out to his door again, and merrily did sing,
'Come hither, hither, pretty Fly, with the pearl and silver wing;
Your robes are green and purple—there's a crest upon your head;
Your eyes are like the diamond bright, but mine are dull as lead!'

Alas, alas! how very soon this silly little Fly,
Hearing his wily, flattering words, came slowly flitting by;
With buzzing wings she hung aloft, then near and nearer drew,
Thinking only of her brilliant eyes, and green and purple hue—
Thinking only of her crested head—poor foolish thing!

At last,
Up jumped the cunning Spider, and fiercely held her fast.
He dragged her up his winding stair, into his dismal den,
Within his little parlour—but she ne'er came out again!

And now dear little children, who may this story read,
To idle, silly flattering words, I pray you ne'er give heed:
Unto an evil counsellor, close heart and ear and eye,
And take a lesson from this tale, of the Spider and the Fly.

Literary Device

- *Your eyes are like the diamond bright, but mine are dull as lead* are examples of **similes** to show the contrast between the eyes of the Fly and the Spider.
- *buzzing wings* is an example of **onomatopoeia**.

crest: tuft of fur
wily: deceitful but clever
flattering: full of praise and compliments
flitting: moving swiftly and lightly
aloft: up in the air
fast: (here) tightly so that one could not escape
dismal: gloomy
idle: worthless
heed: pay attention
counsellor: adviser

About the Poet

Mary Howitt (1799–1888) was an English poet who wrote over 180 books. Her poetry was humorous and humanitarian. Primarily for children, her works carried a moral aim with imagination and naturalness. Some of her famous works are *Tales in Verse for Young People, Hymns and Fireside Verses, Hope on, Hope ever, a Tale,* and *No Sense like Common Sense.*

COMPREHENSION

A. Read the stanzas and answer the questions.

1. *'Will you walk into my parlour?' said the Spider to the Fly,*
   'Tis the prettiest little parlour that ever you did spy;
   The way into my parlour is up a winding stair,
   And I've a many curious things to show when you are there.'

   'Oh no, no,' said the little Fly, 'to ask me is in vain,
   For who goes up your winding stair can ne'er come down again.'

   a. What cordial invitation did the Spider extend to the Fly?

   b. What does *spy* mean here?

   c. What three temptations did the Spider use to trap the Fly?

   d. Why was the invitation *in vain*?

2. *'...I have within my pantry, good store of all that's nice;*
   I'm sure you're very welcome—will you please to take a slice?'

   'Oh no, no,' said the little Fly, 'kind Sir, that cannot be,
   I've heard what's in your pantry, and I do not wish to see!'

   a. Who does *I* refer to in the first line?

   b. What was the speaker offering from his good store?

   c. Why was the Fly not interested in seeing the contents of the pantry?

   d. Mention the rhyme scheme used in the aforesaid lines.

3. *For well he knew the silly Fly would soon come back again:*
   So he wove a subtle web, in a little corner sly,
   And set his table ready, to dine upon the Fly.

   What do the lines tell us about the Spider? Tick the correct words.

fierce	*innocent*	*pretty*	*scheming*	*polite*
bloodthirsty	*gullible*	*bold*	*brutal*	*amiable*
cruel	*vain*	*trustworthy*		

4. *Hearing his wily, flattering words, came slowly flitting by;*
   With buzzing wings she hung aloft, then near and nearer drew,
   Thinking only of her brilliant eyes, and green and purple hue—
   Thinking only of her crested head—poor foolish thing!

   a. Who does *his* and *she* refer to?

   b. Why do you think the word *thinking* has been repeated?

   c. Pick out the words and phrases that describe the vanity of the Fly.

   d. Explain the phrase *poor foolish thing*.

B. The Spider wove a *subtle word web* to flatter and trick the foolish Fly. Complete the table based on the conversation between the Spider and the Fly. A few have been done for you.

The Spider's invitation	The Fly's reply
Invites her to see	Oh no, no
Says she can ..... bed	.....
Offers ..... eat	.....
Tells her to	I thank you, gentle sir
Tells her ..... are beautiful	Comes nearer and nearer

C. Think and answer the questions.

1. What do you think happened to the Fly in the end? What lesson does the poet want to convey when she advises readers to *close heart and ear and eye*?
2. The open invitation of the Spider went in vain but ironically the Fly's vanity allowed it to get trapped. Do you agree? Explain in your own words.
3. Identify two examples each of repetition and imagery from the poem.

VOCABULARY

A. In the poem, the Spider personifies evil, while the Fly personifies foolishness. Read the sentences. Underline and explain the use of personification in each sentence.

1. The fire was a hungry monster that swallowed the entire forest.

   What is being personified? .....

   Which human trait or quality is given? .....

2. The wind whispered through the dark and gloomy forest.

   What is being personified? .....

   Which human trait or quality is given? .....

3. The ancient door to the palace protested loudly, as we tried to push it open.

   What is being personified? .....

   Which human trait or quality is given? .....

4. The frost paints the pines in winter time.

   What is being personified? .....

   Which human trait or quality is given? .....

5. The lumberjack levelled the trees into a clearing and his chainsaw sang its deadly song.

   What is being personified? .....

   Which human trait or quality is given? .....

6. The old wooden stairs groaned under the weight of hurried feet.

   What is being personified? .....

   Which human trait or quality is given? .....

7. The sun played hide-and-seek with the clouds.

   What is being personified? .....

   Which human trait or quality is given? .....

B. Read the sentences. Underline the instances of alliteration.

1. Three grey geese in a green field grazing,
   Grey were the geese and green was the grazing.

   –*Three Grey Geese* by Mother Goose

2. Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing, doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before.

   –*The Raven* by Edgar Allan Poe

3. Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

   –*Sir Galahad* by Alfred Tennyson

4. While I nodded nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping.

   –*The Raven* by Edgar Allan Poe

5. For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky.

   –*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

WRITING

A. A Venus flytrap is a carnivorous plant which feeds on insects. Find out more about the plant and write a short informative paragraph on it.

Remember to include these details in your paragraph.

- Where the plant is found.
- How it traps its prey and consumes it.
- What such behaviour is called and what it means.

B. Write an interesting conversation between a Venus flytrap and a butterfly similar to the one in the poem. Read out the conversation in the class.

Read at leisure...

- *The Butterfly and the Caterpillar* by Joseph Lauren

  This poem is a conversation between a caterpillar and a butterfly. It reminds us to respect every living creature as everybody is blessed with a unique trait, and that we must never look down upon someone if they are different from us.

- *The Louse and The Mosquito* by Vikram Seth

  This poem is based on an Indian legend. A kind-hearted louse, who lives with her family in a king's quilt, allows a clever mosquito to become a guest just for one night. The selfish mosquito ends up biting the king without paying any heed to the louse's instructions.

9 Frankenstein's Creation

–Mary Shelley

READING

Can you think of examples where science has been harmful for mankind, instead of being helpful? The story is an excerpt from Mary Shelly's Frankenstein, where the explorer Robert Walton writes a series of letters to his sister in England in which he retells Victor Frankenstein's tragic story. Frankenstein is a brilliant young scientist who creates a living being by bringing a dead body to life. However, Frankenstein is horrified by his appearance and abandons him. Read on to find out what happens next.

It was on a dreary night of November that I saw what I had achieved in two years of toil. With great anxiety, I collected the instruments of life around me to infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard; and its limbs jerked in uncontrolled movements.

How do I describe the wretch I had created with such pains? He had yellow skin which barely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was lustrous black and flowing; his teeth had a pearly whiteness; and his watery eyes were set in dun-white sockets.

dreary: dull
toil: hard work
infuse: fill someone with an emotion or quality
wretch: miserable creature
lustrous: shiny, glossy
dun-white: of a dull white colour

However, now horror and disgust filled my heart for the being. Unable to look at the creature I had created, I rushed out of the room. I tried to sleep in my room, but started up, disturbed by my dreams. By the dim and yellow light of the moon I saw the miserable monster. He was holding up the curtains of the bed, and his eyes were fixed on me. He might have spoken; one hand stretched out to hold me back, but I escaped and rushed downstairs. I took refuge in the courtyard, and passed the night miserably. In the morning, I found the house empty of the creature.

For several months afterward, I stayed in bed, suffering from a nervous fever. Then, a letter from my father arrived, telling me that my youngest brother William had been found murdered. I knew I had to return home immediately.

It was completely dark when I arrived in Geneva. The gates of the town were shut, and I was forced to pass the night at a village outside. A storm was raging in the mountains. I wandered out to watch it, and with little concern for my safety, decided to visit the spot where poor William had been murdered.

Suddenly, in the darkness, I saw a figure lurking behind a clump of trees near me. A flash of lightning lit up the sky, and revealed the gigantic and deformed shape of the creature. It was the wretch whom I had brought to life. What was he doing here? Could he be the murderer of my brother?

refuge: shelter
raging: continuing with great force
lurking: lying in wait, hiding
clump: a small group (of plants) growing together
gigantic: huge
mourning: grief
avenge: take revenge for

I was convinced of it the moment the thought entered my mind. The creature passed me quickly, and I lost him in the gloom. I thought of following him, but another flash showed him hanging among the rocks. With unnatural speed, he soon reached the summit of the mountain and disappeared.

I entered my father's house at five in the morning. It was a house in mourning, and from that time I lived in daily fear of the monster's wickedness. At the same time, I wanted to see him again to avenge the death of William.

My wish was soon granted. One day I had wandered off alone up the valley of Chamonix, and was resting along the side of the mountain, when I saw a man coming towards me over the crevices in the ice at superhuman speed. It was the monster, and his face was filled with bitter anguish.

'Begone!' I exclaimed 'Or, rather, stay, that I may turn you to dust!'

'I expected this reception,' said the monster. 'All men hate the wretched! I must be the most hated of them all. But if you agree to my conditions I will leave the world of men and you at peace. If you refuse, be prepared for the death of your remaining loved ones.'

I was furious, but he continued: 'Have I not suffered enough? Remember that I am your creature. All around me, I see happiness, but I am excluded from it. I was compassionate, but misery made me a demon. I have helped people, I have saved people's lives when they were in danger, but I have been stoned and shot at in return. The desert mountains and colourless glaciers are now my refuge. Only the bleak sky is kind to me. Listen to me, Frankenstein, I am alone and miserable, and only one who is just like myself would be my loyal companion. You must create a woman for me who will be my bride.'

'Cut off from the entire world, we shall be attached to one another. Our lives might not be happy, but they will be harmless. You shall never see us again: We will go away to the vast wilds of South America, and my life will flow quietly away.'

I pitied him, then, and replied: 'I agree to your demand, but only on your solemn promise to leave Europe forever.'

'I swear,' he cried, 'Go home, and start working: I shall watch the progress with anxiety.'

Saying this, he left.

Literary Device

The words *turn you to dust* is an example of **idiom**; having a meaning not literally inferred from the individual word *dust*, but meaning *to destroy something completely.*

Chamonix: a town of eastern France at the foot of Mont Blanc; major centre for skiing and mountaineering
crevices: narrow openings or cracks, especially in a rock or wall
anguish: pain and suffering
begone: go away (an expression of annoyance or anger)
turn you to dust: (here) destroy you completely
reception: (here) welcome
wretched: (here) inferior, worthless
glaciers: slowly moving mass of ice originating from an accumulation of snow
bleak: cold and empty
vast: extensive
solemn: sincere, honest

I left for England with my friend Henry Clerval. We parted in Scotland. I continued on to the remotest part of the Orkney Islands, where I would work to create a bride for the creature.

Three years ago, I had created a fiend and was now about to create another. I did not know what kind of a person she would be. He had sworn to leave human society and hide himself in remote deserts, but she had not. Even if they were to leave Europe, their children might terrorise mankind.

remotest: most isolated
fiend: demon
sworn: promised
solitary: lonely, a place set apart from others
gnashed: ground or grated
scorn: contempt, to be ridiculed in a disrespectful manner

I was alone on a solitary island, when the monster that I dreaded, appeared. By then, my mind was made up: I would never create another like him.

'Begone!' I cried, 'I break my promise. I will never create a being that might be like you in wickedness.'

The monster gnashed his teeth in anger. 'Will every man find a wife for himself, and each beast have his mate, and I be alone? I had feelings of affection, and they were returned by hatred and scorn. I am leaving now, as you ask, but remember, I will always be with you.'

I rushed forward to stop him, but he left the house at great speed after delivering his terrible threat. I saw him sail away in a boat, which shot across the waters with the swiftness of an arrow.

The next day I set off to rejoin Clerval and return home. But I never saw my friend again. The monster had taken his life too, as I found, and for a time I was put in prison on suspicion of the crime. On my release I returned to Geneva, to watch over those I loved.

Literary Device

Swiftness of an arrow is an example of a **simile**. It shows that the monster moved very swiftly, just like the way an arrow moves.

delivering: (here) conveying
swiftness: speed
suspicion: doubt

About the Author

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1797–1851) was an English novelist, short story writer, and travel writer. Her published works include *The Life and Adventures of Castruccio, Prince of Lucca, The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck,* and *Rambles in Germany and Italy.* She wrote about knowledge for good or evil purposes and the use and abuse of technology.

COMPREHENSION

A. Complete the short summary of the story using a suitable option from the brackets.

1. The story is an excerpt from explorer Robert Walton's series of letters to his sister in England where he retells ..... *(Henry Clerval's/ William Frankenstein's/Victor Frankenstein's)* tragic story.
2. Victor was a brilliant scientist, who was able to create a ..... *(wretched creature/fairy with pearly whiteness/she-demon with lustrous hair)* by bringing a dead body to life.

3. However, ... *(love and affection/horror and disgust/terror and dread)* filled his heart for the being.
4. Soon a letter from his father informed him that his ..... *(eldest brother William/ youngest son William/youngest brother William)* had been found murdered in ..... *(Scotland/ Geneva/Orkney Islands).*
5. The lonely creature sought out Victor and demanded ..... *(a bride or revenge/ companionship and a safe home/a sanctuary away from Europe).*
6. Victor realised how destructive his experiments had become and made up his mind to ..... *(create another monster like the fiend/never create another monster like the creature/never practise any more experiments).*

B. Answer the questions briefly.

1. Who was Victor Frankenstein? What did he achieve in two years of toil?
2. Describe the monster as his creator, Victor, saw him.
3. How did Victor spend the night the monster was created?
4. Why did Victor return home to Geneva urgently?
5. Describe Victor's first sight of the monster when he arrived in Geneva.
6. *I expected this reception.* What did the monster mean? Why did he search for love and companionship?
7. What was the monster's condition to leave mankind and Victor in peace?

C. Think and answer the questions.

1. *'Begone!' I cried, 'I break my promise.'* How did Victor take responsibility for his actions by breaking his promise?
2. What do you think happened at the end of the story?
3. Who do you think is the more destructive character in the story: the monster or the scientist? Write a paragraph giving reasons for your answer.

VOCABULARY

A. Match the phrasal verbs in column A with their meanings in column B.

Column A	Column B
1. to turn back the clock	a. to refuse something
2. to turn down an offer	b. to return to the past or to a previous way of doing things
3. to turn for the better	c. to search thoroughly, sometimes leaving a place very untidy
4. to turn (one's) nose up at something	d. a change of situation
5. a turn of events	e. to ignore someone or something
6. turning of the tide	f. to start to improve
7. to turn a blind eye to	g. to not accept something you think is not good enough for you
8. to turn a deaf ear to	h. to reverse fortune
9. to turn a place upside down	i. to not bother to hear someone or something

B. In Gothic stories, strange, mysterious adventures happen in dark and lonely places such as graveyards and old castles. Unscramble the Gothic words to make meaningful sentences. One has been done for you.

1. The army of zombies *(biozems)* marched on the roads with expressionless eyes and outstretched arms.

2. The ..... *(surce)* of the pharaohs would be cast upon any person who disturbed the mummy of the Ancient Egyptian kings.
3. The chilling silence of the ..... *(reeie)* night was shattered by a scream.
4. The little boy got ..... *(bugopsosem)* all over his arms as he watched the scary movie.
5. Everyone screamed in ..... *(rrorho)* when they saw the one-eyed monster.
6. Mother was so ..... *(posokde)* by the strange noises that she locked all the doors and windows of the house.
7. Probably the most famous ..... *(mavrepi)* of all time is Count Dracula.
8. People say that this old house is ..... *(eduhnat)* by the spirit of the dead old man.

WRITING

'I always dreaded the lonely walk back home on late nights like that day. It was only eight and already the street wore an empty look. As I turned the corner, a large shadow loomed in front of me! It was the wretched creature…'

Complete the narrative in your own words.

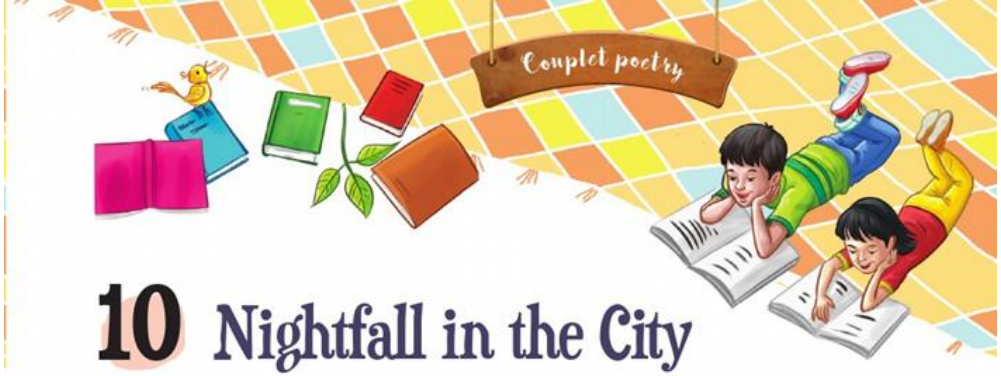
Read at leisure...

📖 *The Last Man* by Mary Shelley

It is a first-person narrative of a man living at the end of the twenty-first century. It tells of a future world that has been ravaged by a plague.

📖 *The Mortal Immortal* by Mary Shelley

It is a short story of a man named Winzy, who is given the gift of immortality by an alchemist.



10 Nightfall in the City of Hyderabad

–Sarojini Naidu

READING

India is a land of different cultures, religions, folk-traditions, and celebrations. Do you recall any procession passing by your house during the festivities, especially at night? The following poem is a fascinating picture gallery of the Hyderabad city's festive night life, around the famous Charminar.

See how the speckled sky burns like a pigeon's throat,
Jewelled with embers of opal and peridote.

See the white river that flashes and scintillates,
Curved like a tusk from the mouth of the city-gates.

Hark, from the minaret, how the muezzin's call
Floats like a battle-flag over the city wall.

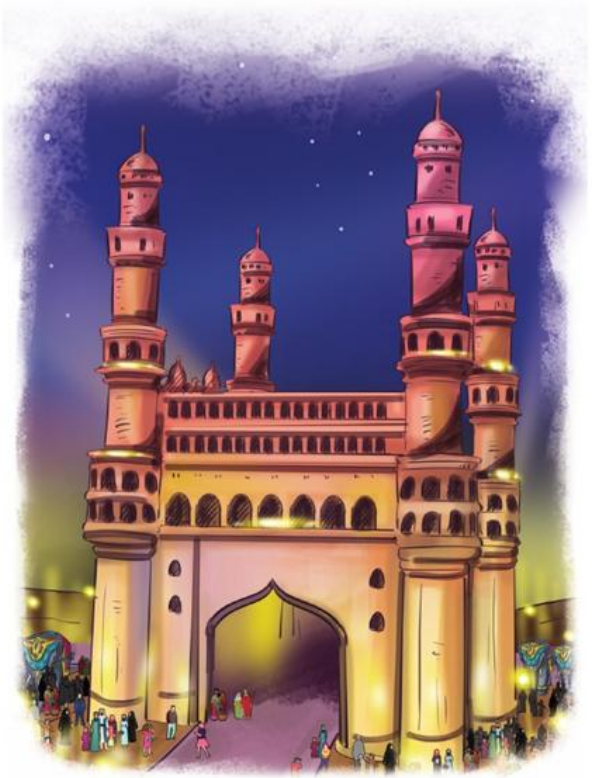
From trellised balconies, languid and luminous
Faces gleam, veiled in a splendour voluminous.

speckled: dotted (with stars)
embers: burning remainders of coal
opal: semi-transparent gemstone
peridote: yellow-gold gemstone
river: (here) Musi river in Hyderabad
scintillates: sparkles
mouth: (here) opening
hark: (archaic) listen
minaret: a tall tower, attached to a mosque
muezzin: a man who calls people to pray
trellised: supported with wooden or metal bars
languid: relaxed
voluminous: (here) in generous amount

Leisurely elephants wind through the winding lanes,
Swinging their silver bells hung from their silver chains.

Round the high Charminar sounds of gay cavalcades
Blend with the music of cymbals and serenades.

Over the city bridge Night comes majestical,
Borne like a queen to a sumptuous festival.



Literary Device

- *Swinging their silver bells hung from their silver chains* is an example of **repetition**.
- *Round the high Charminar sounds of gay cavalcades* is an example of **visual imagery** as the *gay cavalcades* create the vivid description of the joyous procession.

leisurely: unhurriedly
wind: twist and turn
Charminar: a famous monument and mosque with four minarets. It was built in 1591 and is situated in Hyderabad.
gay: happy
cavalcades: parades, processions
blend: combine, mix
cymbals: large, round metal plates used as a musical instrument
serenades: musical performances to honour someone
majestical: having impressive beauty
borne: carried
sumptuous: grand and very expensive

About the Poet

Sarojini Naidu (1879–1949), born in Hyderabad, is fondly known as the Nightingale of India or *Bharat Kokila*. A child prodigy, Indian independence activist, and poet, she was the first female Governor of an Indian state. She began writing at the age of 12. She wrote the collection of poems, *The Golden Threshold, The Bird of Time,* and *The Broken Wing.* Her themes and background revolved around Indian festivals, occupations, and the lives of Indians during that period.

COMPREHENSION

A. Fill in the blanks based on your understanding of the poem.

1. The comparison(s), ..., show(s) that the city becomes an extension of nature for the poet.
   a. *the Night borne like a queen to a sumptuous festival*
   b. *the speckled sky burns like a pigeon's throat*
   c. *the white river that flashes and scintillates, curved like a tusk from the mouth of the city-gates*
   d. All of the above
2. The muezzin calls from the minaret of the mosque
   .....
   a. to make a battle cry.
   b. to call worshippers to pray.
   c. to announce the festivities around the Charminar.
   d. to scare away the pigeons.
3. The faces have been called *languid* because.....
   a. they are glowing despite their veils.
   b. the trellised balconies are overgrown with flowers and decked with lights.
   c. they seem lazy, just standing atop walls and watching the procession go by.
   d. the women who stand on the balconies do not participate in the festivities.

4. The elephants seem to be moving *leisurely* because .....
   a. they are lazy animals.
   b. they are in no hurry.
   c. they are huge animals and thus move slowly along the narrow, winding lanes.
   d. they are huge animals and find it difficult to move in the narrow lanes of the city.
5. The faces in the balcony are veiled because .....
   a. every face is covered with thin cloth.
   b. they are mostly women whose faces are covered with thin cloth.
   c. they were fearful of being seen.
   d. they were hiding something.
6. The procession was centralised around the famous .....
   a. Char Chinar.
   b. Charminar.
   c. Char Minaret.
   d. City Bridge.
7. The gaiety has been described as a sumptuous festival .....
   a. because it was a splendid morning of celebrations.
   b. because it served tasty meals at the festival.
   c. because of the flawless beauty of the night of celebration.
   d. None of the above

B. Answer the questions briefly.

1. What has the poet used the similes of *the pigeon's throat* and *the tusk* for?
2. Find all the instances of alliteration in the poem.
3. How has the Musi river been described in the night?
4. What does the poet want us to listen to?

5. What has the floating battle-flag been compared to?
6. How has the splendour become voluminous?
7. Find four prominent structures built in the city mentioned in the poem.

C. Think and answer the questions.

1. Describe the active procession around the Charminar in your own words.
2. Who seems to be presiding over the grand festivities?
3. Which couplets celebrate the enthusiasm of life the most?

VOCABULARY

A. Read the sentences. Identify the simile, and fill in the blanks.

1. The storm sounds like a giant's stomach grumbling.

   The storm has been compared to .....
   .....

2. The rain, like nervous tapping, waited impatiently.

   The rain has been compared to .....
   .....

3. Her face looked as fresh as a raindrop.

   The face has been compared to .....
   .....

4. My dragon has eyes like dinner plates,
   It has sharp teeth like daggers,
   Its mouth is dark and deep like a cave.
   The dragon's eyes, teeth, and mouth have been compared to .....
   .....

5. The cat's fur was soft like knitted wool, and its teeth as bright as pearls!

   The cat's fur and teeth have been compared to .....
   .....

6. The moment I entered the amusement park, I started dreaming like Alice in Wonderland.

   Dreaming has been compared to .....
   .....

Imagery

When a writer uses words to create a picture in our mind, it is called an **imagery**. There are various types of imagery. Many of them are related to our five senses which help us create the mental image of the thing we are reading about.

- **Visual imagery:** creates a sight experience for us
- **Olfactory imagery:** creates a smell experience for us
- **Auditory imagery:** creates a sound experience for us
- **Gustatory imagery:** creates a taste experience for us
- **Kinaesthetic imagery:** creates a touch experience for us

B. Read the sentences and underline the part of the sentence that is an example of imagery. Then identify the correct type.

1. The tiny insect crawled up the thin and broken twig.
   (sound/smell/sight)
2. The aroma of the freshly baked biscuits filled the air.
   (smell/taste/sight)
3. One bite of the sour tamarind made me pucker my lips.
   (smell/sound/ taste)
4. The door squeaked every time someone entered the room.
   (sight/sound/ smell)

5. The soft satin cloth was cool beneath my fingers.
   (taste/smell/touch)
6. The fresh and juicy stories were now cold and stale with age.
   (touch/smell/taste)
7. The jewel shone on the cheek of the sky.
   (sight/sound/touch)

WRITING

The poem you just read was published in 1905. The modern-day Charminar or the city of Hyderabad may or may not be exactly similar to its description in the poem. Research and write a comparative essay on the topic: *Monument-then and Monument-now*.

Read at leisure...

📖 *Clouds and Waves* by Rabindranath Tagore

This poem is rich in visual imagery familiar to the Indian flavour. It draws a beautiful comparison between the mother at home and Mother Nature.

📖 *Night of the Scorpion* by Nissim Ezekiel

It is a lyrical narrative of how holy men perform rites and incantations to cure a scorpion bite. People are superstitious and they believe that prayers are the only solution for diseases.

11 A Christmas Carol

–Charles Dickens

READING

Do you celebrate any festival that allows you to exchange gifts? How do you feel when you do something special for others on such occasions of forgiveness and friendship? Ebenezer Scrooge, the old man in the story, is well known for his miserly ways. Scrooge hates celebrations and refuses to show any kindness to others, less fortunate than him. On Christmas eve, Scrooge is visited by a series of ghosts. What does the spirit warn him about? Is he a changed man after the three visitations? Read on to find out.

Characters

- ***Narrator***
- ***Scrooge:*** a grumpy old man
- ***Nephew:*** a cheerful young man
- ***Gentleman:*** a kind man
- ***Marley:*** a whining ghost
- ***First Ghost***
- ***Fezziwig:*** a jovial man
- ***Second Ghost***
- ***Mrs Cratchit:*** a kind mother
- ***Bob Cratchit:*** a kind father and Scrooge's clerk
- ***Tiny Tim:*** a young boy
- ***The Two Young Cratchits:*** two fun-loving and energetic little children
- ***Man with Monstrous Chin***
- ***Another Gentleman***
- ***Red-faced Gentleman***
- ***Boy:*** a bit rough young boy
- ***Three or Four Good-Humoured Men***

Act One: Marley's Ghost

[Once upon a Christmas eve, old Scrooge was sitting busy in his counting-house.]

Nephew: A merry Christmas, uncle!

Scrooge: Bah! ...Humbug!

Nephew: You don't mean that, I am sure? I have always thought of Christmas time as a kind, forgiving, pleasant time. Though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good.

Scrooge: Good afternoon.

Nephew: I'll keep my Christmas humour to the last. So A Merry Christmas, uncle!

Scrooge: GOOD AFTERNOON!!!

[His nephew leaves, but the clerk, in letting Scrooge's nephew out, has let two other people in.]

Gentleman: Good afternoon, sir. A few of us are trying to raise money for the poor and the destitute to buy some food and means of warmth during the festive season. How much would you like to donate?

Scrooge: Nothing! I wish to be left alone. I don't make merry at Christmas, and I shall not make idle people merry.

[Scrooge goes home, but to his horror he sees in the knocker, his dead colleague, Marley's face with a dismal light on it.]

Scrooge: Pooh, pooh!

Literary Device

- *Though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket* is an example of metonymy. **Metonymy** is a figure of speech that refers to something using a substitute word that is related in meaning to the original thing or concept. Here, *gold or silver* refers to *money*.
- *Pooh, pooh!* This is an example of **onomatopoeia**.

humbug: nonsense; false talk to fool others
destitute: poor, penniless
donate: give for a good cause; charity
idle: inactive, lazy

Narrator: Scrooge closes the door with a *BANG*. Scrooge goes up, not caring how dark it is. Darkness is cheap. He puts on his dressing-gown and slippers and his nightcap, and sits down before the very low fire to have his gruel. As he glances at a disused bell that hangs in the room he sees it begin to swing. Soon it rings out loudly and so does every bell in the house. This is succeeded by a clanking noise below. Then he hears it louder, then coming up the stairs; to his door, through the heavy door, and a spectre passes into the room before his eyes. It is Marley's ghost!

Scrooge: Who are you?

Marley: Ask me who I was.

Scrooge: Who were you then?

Marley: In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley. You don't believe in me.

gruel: a cheap simple food made by boiling oats with water
spectre: ghost

Scrooge: I don't.

Marley: *[HOWL] OOOOOHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!*

Scrooge: Mercy! Dreadful spirit, why do you trouble me?

Marley: It is required of every man, that the spirit within him should walk among his fellow-men, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it has to do so after death. I am here to-night to warn you that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate**.** You will be haunted by Three Spirits. Expect the first tomorrow night, when the bell tolls One. Expect the second on the next night at the same hour. The third, upon the next night, when the last stroke of Twelve has ceased to vibrate.

[Scrooge goes straight to bed, without undressing, and falls asleep instantly.] [SNORING]

Act Two: The First of the Three Spirits

Narrator: When Scrooge awakens, the church clock tolls a melancholy gong. Lights flash up in the room upon the instant, and the curtains of his bed are drawn aside by a strange child-like figure.

Scrooge: Who and what are you?

First Ghost: I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

Narrator: As the words are spoken, they pass through the wall, and stand in the busy thoroughfares of a city. It is Christmas and the Ghost stops at a certain warehouse door, and asks Scrooge if he knows it.

Scrooge: I apprenticed here!

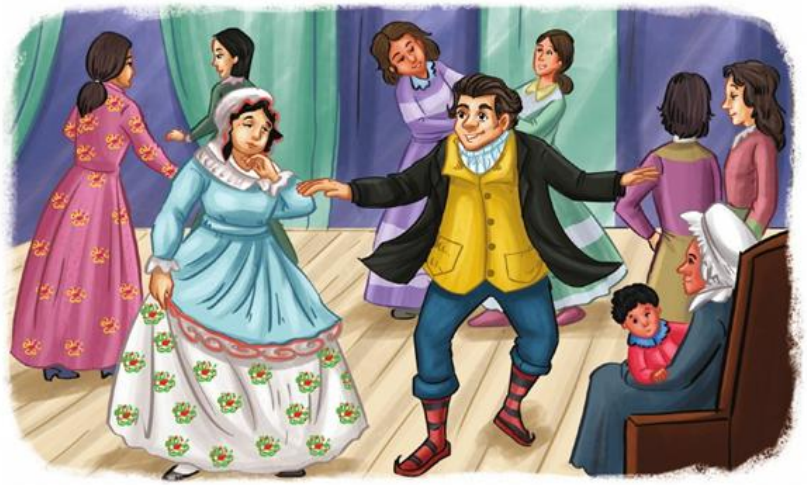
[They go in. An old gentleman sat behind a high desk.]

Scrooge: Why, it's old Fezziwig alive again!

Fezziwig: Yo ho, there! Ebenezer!

[A living and moving picture of Scrooge's former self, a young man, come briskly in, accompanied *by his fellow apprentice.]*

mercy: forgiveness
dreadful: terrible
fate: what is meant to happen in one's life
haunted: frequented by ghosts
tolls: (here) rings
ceased: stopped
melancholy: sad
thoroughfares: passages through somewhere
warehouse: store, depot
apprenticed: worked to learn a trade
briskly: quickly



Fezziwig: No more work to-night. Christmas eve. Let's have the shutters down, before a man can say Jack Robinson!

[The warehouse is snug and warm on the winter night. In comes a fiddler, and goes up to the desk and begins to play. When the clock strikes eleven this ball breaks up. Mr and Mrs Fezziwig, shaking hands with every person as he or she go out, wish him or her Merry Christmas.]

First Ghost: A small reason, to make these silly folks so full of gratitude. Does he deserve this praise?

Scrooge: It isn't that, Spirit. He has the power to make us happy or unhappy; to make our work a pleasure or toil. The happiness he gives is worth a fortune. Spirit! Take me away from this place. Haunt me no longer!

[Scrooge is conscious of being exhausted, and is overcome by an irresistible drowsiness. He has barely time to fall into bed before he sinks into a heavy sleep.] [SNORING SOUNDS]

Literary Device

Before a man can say Jack Robinson is an example of **allusion**. Here, a common comparison is used to represent quickness.

snug: a comfortable and warm place
fiddler: (here) a person who plays the violin, especially in folk music
ball: (here) dance
gratitude: thankfulness
toil: hard work
irresistible: uncontrollable
drowsiness: sleepiness

Act Three: The Second of the Three Spirits

[Scrooge awakens in his bedroom.]

Narrator: A warm fire lights the fireplace. Heaped upon the floor to form a kind of throne, are turkeys, geese, long wreaths of sausages, mince-pies, plum-puddings, red-hot chestnuts, cherry-cheeked apples, juicy oranges, luscious pears, great bowls of punch and immense cakes. Upon this couch a majestic Giant was sitting with a glowing torch.

Second Ghost: I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Touch my robe!

Narrator: As Scrooge touches the royal robe, the room and its contents all vanish instantly, and they stand in front of Bob Cratchit's, his clerk's dwelling, on a snowy Christmas.

Mrs Cratchit: Where is your father? And your brother Tiny Tim!

The Two Young Cratchits: There's father coming…

[In comes Bob, the father, his ragged clothes darned and brushed, to look decent; and Tiny Tim upon his shoulder. Alas for Tiny Tim, he carries a little crutch, and has his limbs supported by an iron frame!]

Mrs Cratchit: And how did little Tim behave?

Bob Cratchit: As good as gold and better. While coming home he told me, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple. It would do all men good to remember, upon Christmas day, who made lame beggars walk and blind men see.

Narrator: The young Cratchits returned with the celebration goose. Mrs Cratchit made the gravy, Peter mashed the potatoes vigorously; Belinda sweetened the apple-sauce; Martha dusted the plates; Bob sat Tiny Tim beside him in a tiny corner at the table; the two young Cratchits set chairs for everybody.

Literary Device

As good as gold
The **simile** portrays the goodness of the person.

robe: a long, loose piece of clothing
dwelling: house
darned: repaired with long stitches
mashed: reduced to a pulp or paste
vigorously: forcefully

Grace was said. Mrs Cratchit prepared to plunge the carving knife. As she did one murmur of delight arose all around the board.

Tiny Tim: Hurrah!

Narrator: The plates are changed and Mrs Cratchit enters, with the pudding, like a speckled cannon-ball, blazing with ignited brandy, with Christmas holly stuck into the top.

At last the dinner is all done, the cloth is cleared. Then all the Cratchit family draws round the hearth, while the chestnuts on the fire crackle noisily. They are happy, grateful, pleased with one another. Scrooge had his eye upon on Tiny Tim, until the last. But the whole scene passes off. Suddenly, the bell strikes (Bong!) Twelve.

The Ghost vanishes. Remembering Jacob Marley's prediction, Scrooge lifts up his eyes, sees a Phantom, draped and hooded, coming like a mist along the ground towards him.

Act Four: The Last of the Spirits

Scrooge: Ghost of the Future! I fear you more than any spectre I have seen. Will you not speak to me?

carving knife: a large knife used for cutting cooked meat
holly: a small evergreen tree that is often used as a decoration in Europe and North America
prediction: a thing foretold
phantom: spirit, ghost, shadow

[The ghost was silent, but pointed onward with its hand.]

Scrooge: Lead on, Spirit!

Narrator: In the heart of the city the Spirit stops beside a group of business men. Scrooge advances to listen to their talk.

Man with Monstrous Chin: I don't know much about it, only that he's dead.

Another Gentleman: When did he die?

Man with Monstrous Chin: Last night, I believe.

Red-Faced Gentleman: What has he done with his money?

Man with Monstrous Chin: He hasn't left it to me. That's all I know.

[Now Scrooge almost touches a bare bed and on it, unwept, uncared for, is the body of an unknown man.]

Narrator: The Ghost then took him to poor Bob Cratchit's house and found the mother and the children seated round the fire. Everyone was quiet.

Mrs Cratchit: And there is your father at the door!

[Bob comes in.]

The Two Young Cratchits: Don't mind it, father. Don't be grieved!

[The boys press their cheeks to their father's face. Bob is very cheerful with them, and speaks pleasantly to all the family.]

Bob Cratchit: I wish you could have gone. But you'll see it often. I promised him that I would walk there on a Sunday. My little, little child! My little child!

Scrooge: Spectre, our parting moment is at hand. Tell me who is the man we saw lying dead?

[The Ghost transports him to a miserable churchyard and points to one. Scrooge creeps towards it, trembling, he follows the finger. Upon the stone of the neglected grave, he reads his own name—EBENEZER SCROOGE.]

bare: not covered by anything
grieved: sorrowful

Scrooge: No, Spirit! O no, no! Hear me! I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been. Why show me this, if I am past all hope? Assure me that I can change these shadows by an altered life. I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. O, tell me I may erase the writing on this stone!

Narrator: Holding up his hands in one last prayer to have his fate reversed, he saw the Phantom's hood and dress shrink down into his bedpost. The bed was his own, the room was his own. The Time before him was his own, to make amends in! Suddenly he heard the church bells ringing.

Running to the window, he opens it, and puts out his head. No fog, no mist, no night; clear, bright, stirring, golden day.

altered: changed
to make amends: (here) to make up for a loss

Scrooge: What is the day today, my boy?

Boy: To-day! Why, CHRISTMAS DAY.

Scrooge: It's Christmas day! I haven't missed it.

Scrooge: Do you know the Poulterer's, in the next street?

Boy: I sure do.

Scrooge: An intelligent boy! Do you know whether they've sold the prize Turkey that was hanging up there?—the big one?

Boy: What, the one as big as me?

Scrooge: Yes, my lad!

Boy: It's hanging there now.

Scrooge: Go and buy it, and tell 'em to bring it here. Come back and I'll give you a shilling. Come back in less than five minutes, and I'll give you half a crown!

[The boy was off like a shot.]

Scrooge: I'll send it to Bob Cratchit's! He will not know who sent it. It's twice the size of Tiny Tim.

[Scrooge dresses himself and at last goes out into the streets. Walking with his hands behind him, Scrooge regards every one with a smile.]

Three or Four Good-Humoured Men: Good morning, sir! A merry Christmas to you!

[He is early at the office next morning to catch Bob Cratchit coming late! Bob is full eighteen minutes behind his time.]

Scrooge: Hello! What do you mean by coming here at this time of day?

Bob Cratchit: I am very sorry, sir. I am behind my time.

Scrooge: Now, I am not going to stand for this sort of thing any longer. And therefore, I am about to raise your salary! A merrier Christmas, Bob, my good fellow, than I have given you for many a year! I'll raise your salary, and try to help your struggling family.

poulterer: a shop breeding and selling poultry meat, like chickens or turkey

[Bob trembles. Scrooge does it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who does NOT die, he is a second father. He becomes as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man as the good old city knew.]

(Adapted by Thomas Hutchinson)

About the Author

Charles John Huffam Dickens (1812–1870) was born in Portsmouth, England and is regarded as the greatest novelist of the Victorian era. The English writer and social critic created some of the world's best-known fictional characters like Uriah Heep and Fagin, Miss Havisham, Scrooge and the Artful Dodger. The author of fifteen novels, five novellas, and countless stories and essays, concerned himself with social issues of the times. He excelled in writing about London settings and ugly and comic characters. His popular works include *Pickwick Papers*, *Oliver Twist*, *A Christmas Carol*, *A Tale of Two Cities* and *David Copperfield*.

COMPREHENSION

A. Fill in the blanks suitably to complete the summary of the play.

1. A mean-spirited, miserly old man named ..... sits in his counting-house on a cold ..... eve.
2. As his nephew leaves with best wishes for a merry Christmas, the old man manages to spit out an angry 'Bah! ..... !' in response to his nephew's 'Merry Christmas!' Two gentlemen also drop by and ask Scrooge for a ..... Scrooge reacts rudely to the visitors with bitterness.
3. Later that evening, after returning to his dark, cold apartment, Scrooge receives a frightening visitation from ....
4. Marley hopes to save Scrooge from .... and warns him that his greedy and self-serving life shall condemn him to a life of a restless spirit.

5. Marley informs Scrooge that three .... next three nights. After the ghost disappears, Scrooge ....

6. He is awakened by the arrival of the ....Ghost of Christmas Past, which looked like a .... The Ghost lets Scrooge revisit his old days, and the place where he served ..... with a jolly merchant named ..... Scrooge was haunted by deep regret.

7. The Second Ghost who visited him was the ....., a ..... wearing ..... He takes Scrooge through London to visit ..... on a snowy Christmas day. Scrooge watches the Cratchit family prepare a feast in their poor home. He discovers that Bob Cratchit has a son, ... Despite being ....., the child is kind and humble which warms Scrooge's heart.

8. On the third night the Ghost of ..... leads Scrooge through a strange series of events relating to an unknown man's death. Scrooge also learns that ...., but the family continues to be supportive and loving. The future needs to be changed, or the Cratchit's family could lose a dear one.

9. Finally the hooded figure takes Scrooge to ..... and points to a ..... Scrooge looks at the headstone and is horrified to see .....

10. He begs the spirit to change his fate, promising to ..... and ..... heart. Soon he finds himself back home, tucked in his bed.

11. On Christmas Day, Scrooge hopes to share his newfound Christmas spirit and asks a boy in the street to get .... with the promised payment of .....; so that he could send it to .....

12. The once miserly Scrooge even gives Cratchit .....
He upholds Christmas in his heart as he treats Tiny Tim as .....
..... and turns out to be a good
.....

B. Answer the questions briefly.

1. What did Scrooge think about Christmas in the beginning? How did his nephew's opinion differ?
2. Why was Scrooge horrified when he returned home from the counting-house?
3. *Darkness is cheap.* What does this statement reveal about Scrooge?
4. *'....that the spirit within him should walk among his fellow-men, and travel far and wide; if that spirit goes not forth in life, it has to do so after death.'* What do Marley's words convey to humankind?
5. *'He has the power to make us happy or unhappy; to make our work a pleasure or toil. The happiness he gives is worth a fortune.'* Who does *he* refer to? How does Scrooge compliment him?

C. Think and answer the questions.

1. *As good as gold and better…he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple. It would do all men good to remember, upon Christmas day, who made lame beggars walk and blind men see.* Tiny Tim was mature beyond his years. What do Bob's words convey about his son?
2. *Go and buy it, and tell 'em to bring it here. Come back and I'll give you a shilling. Come back in less than five minutes, and I'll give you half a crown!* How did the speaker's attitude towards money change from the donation incident at the start of the play?
3. How did the miserly man plan to erase the writing on the stone? What amends did he make that showed that he was a changed man? Pick out a sentence from the play to show that Scrooge became an ideal citizen of the land.

VOCABULARY

A. Look at these Christmas words given in the box. Find them in the word search. Then use any five of them in sentences of your own.

carols	*presents*	*bells*	*stockings*	*wreath*
jolly	*mistletoe*	*reindeer*	*elves*	*Santa*

G	J	W	P	A	J	X	R	V	U	W	O
W	E	B	R	O	T	E	O	H	F	I	Y
D	J	O	L	E	E	N	M	Z	L	S	E
V	W	L	T	D	A	L	A	P	R	T	I
J	Y	C	N	E	O	T	O	S	H	N	S
O	B	I	E	B	L	Y	H	C	W	E	B
S	E	V	L	E	T	T	U	C	S	S	E
R	C	A	R	O	L	S	S	C	G	E	L
J	F	Z	V	G	Y	Y	Y	I	H	R	L
S	G	N	I	K	C	O	T	S	M	P	S
T	O	T	V	K	H	H	R	X	Z	R	D
V	L	V	K	I	N	E	W	P	W	V	C

B. Find suitable antonyms for the words from the play.

Word	Antonym
1. depressed	j_ _ _ _l
2. lethargic	e_ _ _ _ _ _ _c
3. tiny	m_ _ _ _ _ _ _s
4. active	i _ _e
5. expensive	c_ _ _p
6. cruelty	m_ _ _y
7. wonderful	d_ _ _ _ _ _l
8. continued	c_ _ _ _d
9. unchanged	a _ _ _ _ _d
10. cheerful	m_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _y
11. sluggishly	v_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _y
12. mourning	c_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _n
13. thankless	g _ _ _ _ _ _ _e
14. slightly	i_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _y

WRITING

Imagine you are the organiser in your housing society. Write a report on how you organised a festive event. Use the Party Planner on page 105 to brainstorm.

Keep these points in mind while writing the report.

- Use formal language.
- Include a description of a sequence of events at the party.
- Write only facts; do not include your own opinion of the event.
- Use evidence/examples to support your facts.

PARTY PLANNER

A WORKSHEET TO HELP YOU STAY ON TRACK

OCCASION

THEMES

DATE/TIME

1-2 MONTHS TO GO

- Select a party theme
- Make guest list
- Choose a location
- Purchase invitation
- Make menu
- Decide on decoration
- Send out invitation
-

2 WEEKS TO GO

- Order any food
- Shop for supplies
- Make DIY items
- Buy thank you cards
- Packaging
-
-
-

DAY OF PARTY

- Pick up food/ice/decor
- Set up party
- Enjoy all your hard work
-
-
-
-
-

FOOD AND DRINKS

DECORATIONS

ACTIVITIES

NOTES

Read at leisure...

- *The Fir-Tree* by Hans Christian Andersen

  This tale is about a tree who cannot wait to grow up and achieve greater things, rather than appreciate living in the present. The fir-tree later learns in the story that only the present moment is worthwhile, and that it is pointless to focus on what we don't have instead of enjoying what we have.

- *A Christmas Dream and How It Came True* by Louisa May Alcott

  This story is a young girl's take on Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. Ten-year-old Effie lives the life most children dream of, filled with delicious treats and wonderful toys. One night she experiences a dream that will forever change the meaning of Christmas for her. In it, she meets a group of underprivileged children and she is inspired to create a Christmas they will never forget.

Literary Genres

We can classify a piece of writing based on what it is about and the form it takes. This is known as a **literary genre**. The stories, poems and plays in the literature readers belong to these genres.

Prose

An **adventure** is a type of story or novel which has a lot of action and involves danger, risk, and excitement.

An **autobiography** is an account of a person's life written by that person.

A **biography** is an account of someone's life written by someone else.

A **fable** is a story about supernatural or extraordinary creatures, with a moral lesson at the end. In fables, animals, plants, and non-living things often speak as humans.

A **fantasy** is a story or novel which has a strange or other-worldly setting or characters. It often involves magic and supernatural creatures.

Gothic fiction is a style of writing that has elements of fear, horror, death, and gloom. The central character is usually driven by a very strong emotion. Most of the stories involve monsters or vampires that make death and suffering crucial to the development of the plot.

A **historical story** is set in the past. It can be a fictional story which is set in real events in history.

Humour is a type of literature whose aim is to entertain people or make them laugh. A humorous story often has fun and excitement as its main elements.

Mystery fiction consists of detective stories that usually involve a mysterious crime to be solved. Often the central character is a detective who uncovers the mystery through a logical deduction from facts presented to the reader.

Nonsense literature is a light-hearted work of fiction. Although it often defies common sense, it is not completely meaningless. In fact, the story or poem must continually balance between sense and nonsense.

Realistic fiction, as the name suggests, resembles real life. Fictional characters in these stories react similarly to real people, and events in the story could have actually occurred to people or animals in a believable setting.

A **short story** narrates imaginary events and is usually only a few pages long.

A **travelogue** describes the experiences of a particular person's travels to or in a particular place.

Poetry

A **ballad** is a long song or poem that tells a story in a slow love song. The language can either be simple or from the dialect of the time the work was produced in. Ballads are typically open-ended, and it is left to the audience to deduce the moral of the work from the narration.

Couplet poetry has a series of successive rhyming lines paired in a verse. It is marked by a usual rhythm and rhyme scheme.

Fable poetry is a simple story in verse that provides moral lesson at the end. Fables usually personify animal characters by giving them human attributes.

Free verse is poetry that does not rhyme or have a regular rhythm or pattern.

A **lyric poem** is a short poem whose main purpose is to express emotions or a state of mind. It does not depict actions or events, as narrative poems do.

A **nonsense poem** is a light-hearted, rhyming poem, often for young people, with peculiar characters in unusual situations or an unusual way of describing everyday things.

Drama

Drama is a type of literature that narrates a story which is meant to be acted out for an audience. There are two main types of drama: tragedy and comedy.

Literary Terms

Literary terms describe the various techniques that writers use to create a particular emotional effect. Here are some common literary terms that you have come across in the literature readers.

Alliteration is a figure of speech in which the same consonant sound is repeated in consecutive or closely-placed words in the same sentence, e.g. *Slithering snakes slither silently through the grass.*

Allusion is an indirect reference to a person, event, or thing in history or literature.

Hyperbole is a figure of speech in which the writer exaggerates and makes something sound bigger or more impressive than it really is e.g. *'I told you a thousand times!'*

Irony is a figure of speech or a technique in which the real meaning is exactly the opposite of what is said, e.g. *Oh, what a lovely day*! (said when it is cold and raining).

A **metaphor** is a figure of speech in which a person or thing is compared to another, otherwise unrelated person or thing by stating that they are the same in a particular way, e.g. *She is a rose.*

Metonymy is a figure of speech that refers to something using a word that is related in meaning to the original thing or concept, e.g. *I don't have gold or silver in my pocket*. Here, *gold or silver* refers to *money*.

Onomatopoeia is the use of words whose pronunciation is similar to the sounds they represent, e.g. *honk, bang, buzz.*

A **paradox** is a self-contradictory statement that contains two opposite facts, e.g. *Something that couldn't be done, was done by him.*

Personification is a way of imagining non-living things or abstract ideas as human beings with thoughts, actions and emotions, e.g. *The moon danced over the water.*

A **pun** is a literary device which plays on the different meanings of the same word, or the similar sound of different words, to produce a humorous effect, e.g. *Without geometry, life is pointless.*

Refrain is a line or a group of lines that repeats at regular intervals, in different stanzas. While giving a rhythmic effect to the poem, it also emphasises an idea through repetition.

A **simile** is a figure of speech in which someone or something is compared to a very different person or thing using *as* or *like*, e.g. *He is as brave as a lion.*

A **transferred epithet** is a figure of speech in which an adjective qualifies a noun other than the person or thing it is actually describing, e.g. *I had a sleepless night.*